

# PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

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*Gala*  
**CHRISTMAS**  
*Issue*

**BERNIE  
MAC**

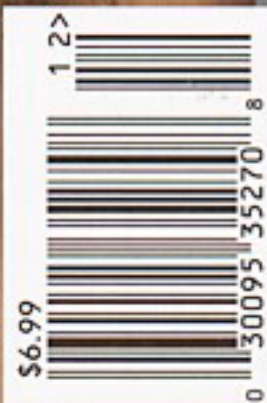
**A HILARIOUS  
PLAYBOY  
INTERVIEW**

**DENISE  
RICHARDS**

**Drop Dead Gorgeous**

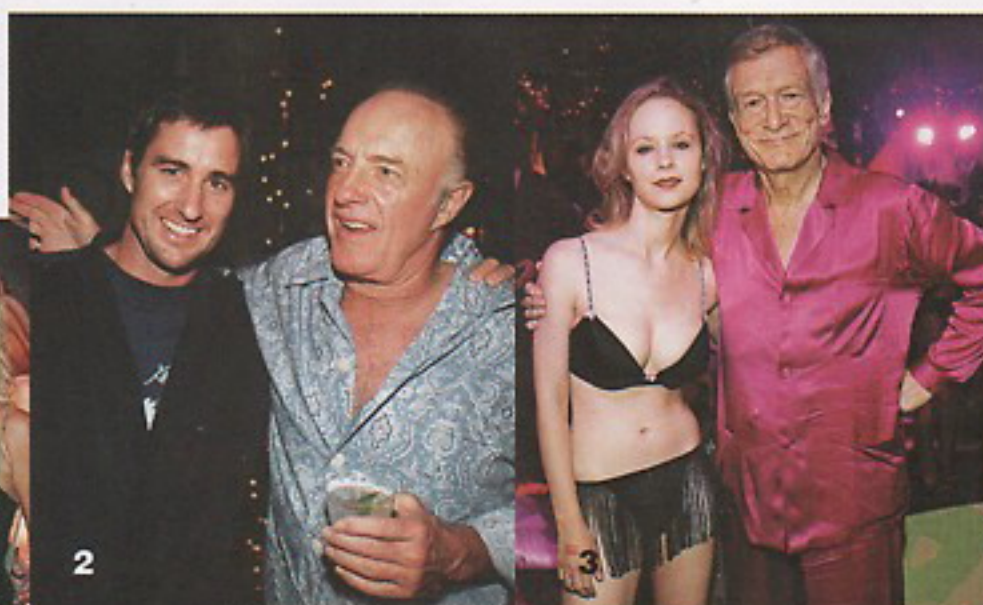
**10 PAGES OF  
EROTIC  
NUDES**

**CELEBRATE WITH  
NORMAN MAILER  
DUSTIN HOFFMAN  
PAT SCHROEDER  
BILL ZEHME  
GLEN DAVID GOLD  
ANNIE PROULX  
THE GODFATHER  
RETURNS  
NAS AJ BAIME  
KANYE WEST  
COLLEGE  
BASKETBALL**

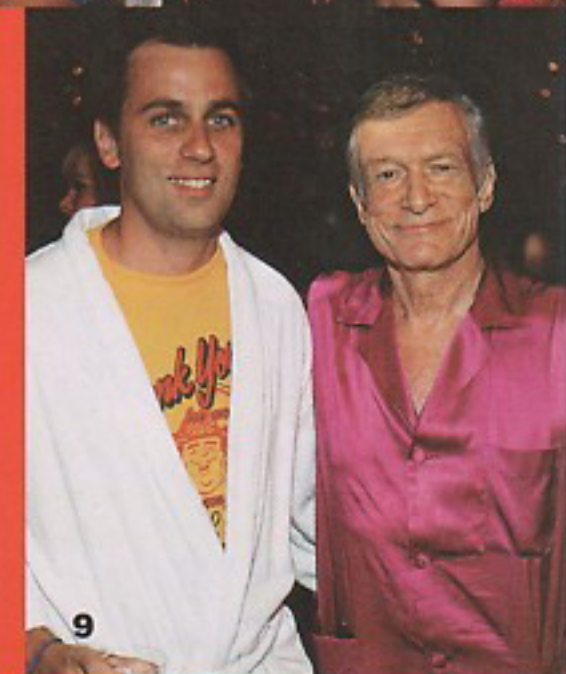




# DREAM A LITTLE DREAM



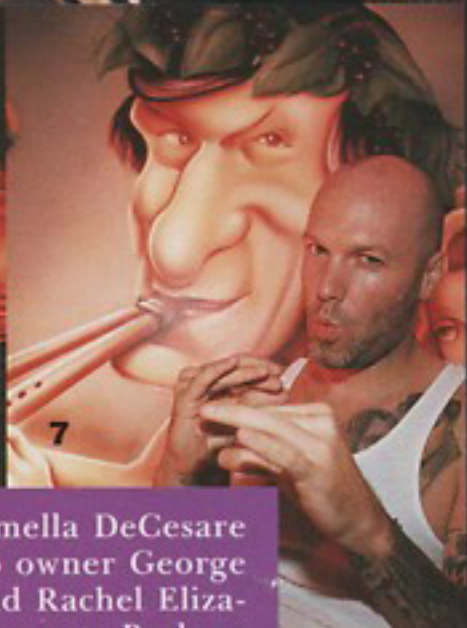
Hef's famous Midsummer Night's Dream party—a full-frontal fantasy fest that draws beautiful A-listers from around the globe—gave partygoers a dazzling night to remember. (1) Hef getting it on with girlfriends Kendra, Holly and Bridget. (2) Luke Wilson and James Caan. (3) Thora Birch with the Host. (4) Natasha Henstridge and Ryan Alosio. (5) *CSI*'s Archie Kao and friends. (6) *Jackass* star Johnny Knoxville with comedians Sarah Silverman, Jimmy Kimmel and Jeffrey Ross. (7) *The Life Aquatic*'s Bud Cort with some very pretty Painted Ladies. (8) Adrian Grenier of HBO's *Entourage* with Stacy Burke and Elizabeth Dindial. (9) John Heffron, the winner of NBC's *Last Comic Standing*. (10) Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker with his fiancée, Playmate Shanna Moakler. (11) A provocative line of Painted Ladies. (12) Director Michael Bay and Dylan McDermott. (13) Jaime Pressly and James Wilder. (14) Paris Hilton, Jack Osbourne and Bijou Phillips.





# DREAM A LITTLE DREAM

continued



(1) Holly, Hef, PMOY Carmella DeCesare and Palms Hotel & Casino owner George Maloof. (2) Ron Jeremy and Rachel Elizabeth. (3) Soon-to-be-wed Playmate Barbara Moore and Lorenzo Lamas. (4) Jack Black with a nice pair: twins Julie and Shawnie Costello. (5) *Nip/Tuck* star Dylan Walsh with Jason Cerbone of *The Sopranos*. (6) Jamie Kennedy and Danielle Raushi. (7) Fred Durst tooting his own horn. (8) *10-8* star Travis Schuldt and *Eyes* star Natalie Zea. (9) Hef with Playboy models Suzette Johnston and Holly Laar. (10) Owen Wilson with a pretty party posse. (11) MTV *The Real World* alums Mike "The Miz" Mizanin and Randy Barry with friends. (12) L.A. pals Nicky Hilton, Kelly Osbourne and Bijou Phillips. (13) Centerfolds Stephanie Heinrich, Shannon Stewart, Nicole Wood, Jennifer Walcott and Julie McCullough. (14) Playmate of the Year 1996 Stacy Sanches. (15) *Malcolm in the Middle* star Frankie Muniz and Christina Murphy.





# PLAYBOY

## after hours

babe of the month

### Tamie Sheffield

This revved-up starlet takes it all with a shot of adrenaline

The word *relax* is not in actress-hostess Tamie Sheffield's vocabulary. "There is no winding down for me," she says. "I'm scared of routine and boredom. I have to be energized, entertained and excited." Tamie's farm-girl roots (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, anyone?) help her poke fun at the L.A. scene in the play *Pieces (of Ass)*. "I was going to do a monologue called 'Hot Chicks Suck,' but the director said I didn't look bitchy enough," she says. "I look pretty good. I've been in movies such as *Intolerable Cruelty* and *Confi-*

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"I can get decked out in a Prada gown or stay in a hut in Thailand."

---

dence, but I'm not one of those L.A. chicks who just want to know how much you make and what you can do for them." The questions Tamie asks celebrities in her regular gig as a host of Showtime's *The Red Carpet* are considerably more provocative—pushing the envelope comes naturally for a girl addicted to exotic travel and extreme sports like hang gliding, white-water rafting and skydiving. "I like going outside the box and being the odd-ball," she says. "I'm the type of person who can get decked out in a Prada gown for a black-tie affair or stay in a \$6-a-night hut on a beach in Thailand. I need a guy who's spontaneous and has lots of energy. As James Dean said, 'Dream as if you'll live forever, and live as if you'll die tomorrow.'"





**WILD CHILD**

**PUDDLE OF MUD:** As a college cheerleader, Tamie thrilled male spectators with her spread-eagled acrobatics, but her most embarrassing moment occurred with her feet planted firmly on the ground. "It was pouring rain, and I was looking into the stands, probably at a hot guy—I looked good in a cheerleading skirt, and it was a great way to meet men. Then three football players barreled into me. I looked like an Oreo cookie. I was stuck in two inches of mud."

**CARNIVAL KNOWLEDGE:** Prior to coralling celebs on *The Red Carpet*, Tamie worked as a carny, daring suckers to pop her balloons. "I would say this about 5,000 times a day: 'Come on, folks. One dart, one dollar, one hit, one win.'"

**MASTER THESPIAN:** "People always ask if I'm a TV host or an actress. I'm both. Especially when I'm interviewing a boring person. That's when I act. It's all improv. I have to just smile and say 'God, you're so interesting.'"

**MAN IN THE MIRROR:** "I'm looking for a thrill seeker. He needs to be spontaneous, fun and able to keep up with me. I need to find the male version of me."





## ring of fire



CHRIS RYAN

## SMACKDOWN JESUS

### PIOUS GRAPPLERS BODY-SLAM FOR THE LORD

Evangelism and ass kicking—together at last. For the true believers behind Ultimate Christian Wrestling, when it comes to spreading the gospel, parables and psalms can't hold a candle to brute force. We spoke with Rob Adonis, UCW's 295-pound founder and titleholder, and the hooded heel known only as the Prophet.

**PLAYBOY:** Does everyone think you guys are nuts?

**PROPHET:** People were surprised—"What, do you hit each other and say, 'God bless you?'" But in ministry, you change with the times.

**PLAYBOY:** What would Jesus think?

**PROPHET:** Jesus would be totally on fire for UCW.

**PLAYBOY:** What about the whole "turn the other cheek" thing?

**PROPHET:** It also says "an eye for an eye."

**ADONIS:** We're storytellers illustrating in the ring the battles people face in life. You're always fighting evil—addiction, abuse, promiscuity. You're going to have to body-slam those demons.

**PLAYBOY:** Would Jesus have been a good wrestler?

**PROPHET:** Jesus was a carpenter, so he was probably pretty buff. If Jesus were here now, he'd be the star babyface, the world champ.

## employee of the month



## RADAR LOVE

### NETWORK ENGINEER SHANNON LEA KEEPS JUMBOS ALOFT

**PLAYBOY:** What does your job entail?

**SHANNON:** I work for MCI. I monitor the network for the Federal Aviation Administration—communication between airport towers, airplanes, and weather radar. I supervise seven people.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you like being the boss?

**SHANNON:** My personality is very take-charge. The men in the office don't like to be bossed around, but in bed guys like it. I'm passive when I go out—men can be intimidated by strong women, so I let them do their little manly duties. But they enjoy a woman taking charge in bed.

**PLAYBOY:** What do guys notice about you at work?

**SHANNON:** My best features are my breasts, eyes and lips, but my breasts get all the attention. Once I had lunch with a co-worker with my blouse unbuttoned, and he waited until afterward to tell me. He claimed he didn't see anything—but he paid the bill.



Employee of the Month candidates: Send pictures to PLAYBOY Photography Department, Attn: Employee of the Month, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Must be at least 18 years old. Must send photocopies of a driver's license and another valid ID (not a credit card), one of which must include a current photo.

## fashion through the snow

## WINTER WONDER WEAR

### WEATHER THE BIG CHILL IN STYLE

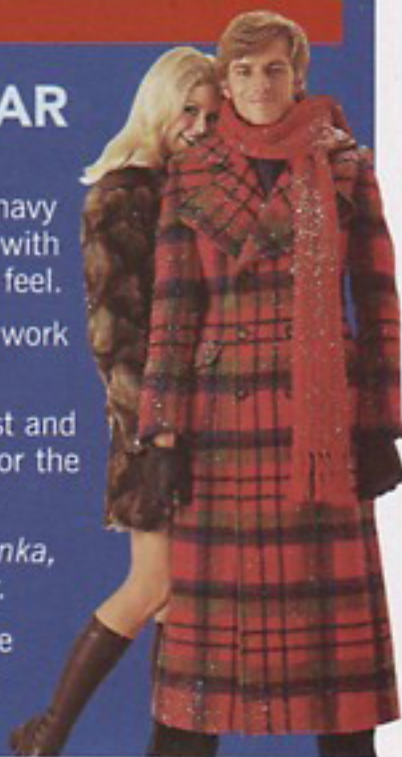
You need at least two overcoats: a classic navy or camel hair to go with your suits, and one with more style (say, tweed) and a less after-work feel.

When it snowed, Grandpa wore galoshes to work over his nice shoes. Grandpa was smart.

Cashmere is the king of wools—the warmest and lightest you can get. But keep an eye out for the next wonder weave: bamboo. Yes, bamboo.

A Russian fur hat with ear flaps is an *ushanka*, and there's no better lid in Siberian weather.

Yes, you can wear colored shirts in winter. Be bold but basic: a true red, a true green, even a true yellow. Give pastels the season off.





# Double down.



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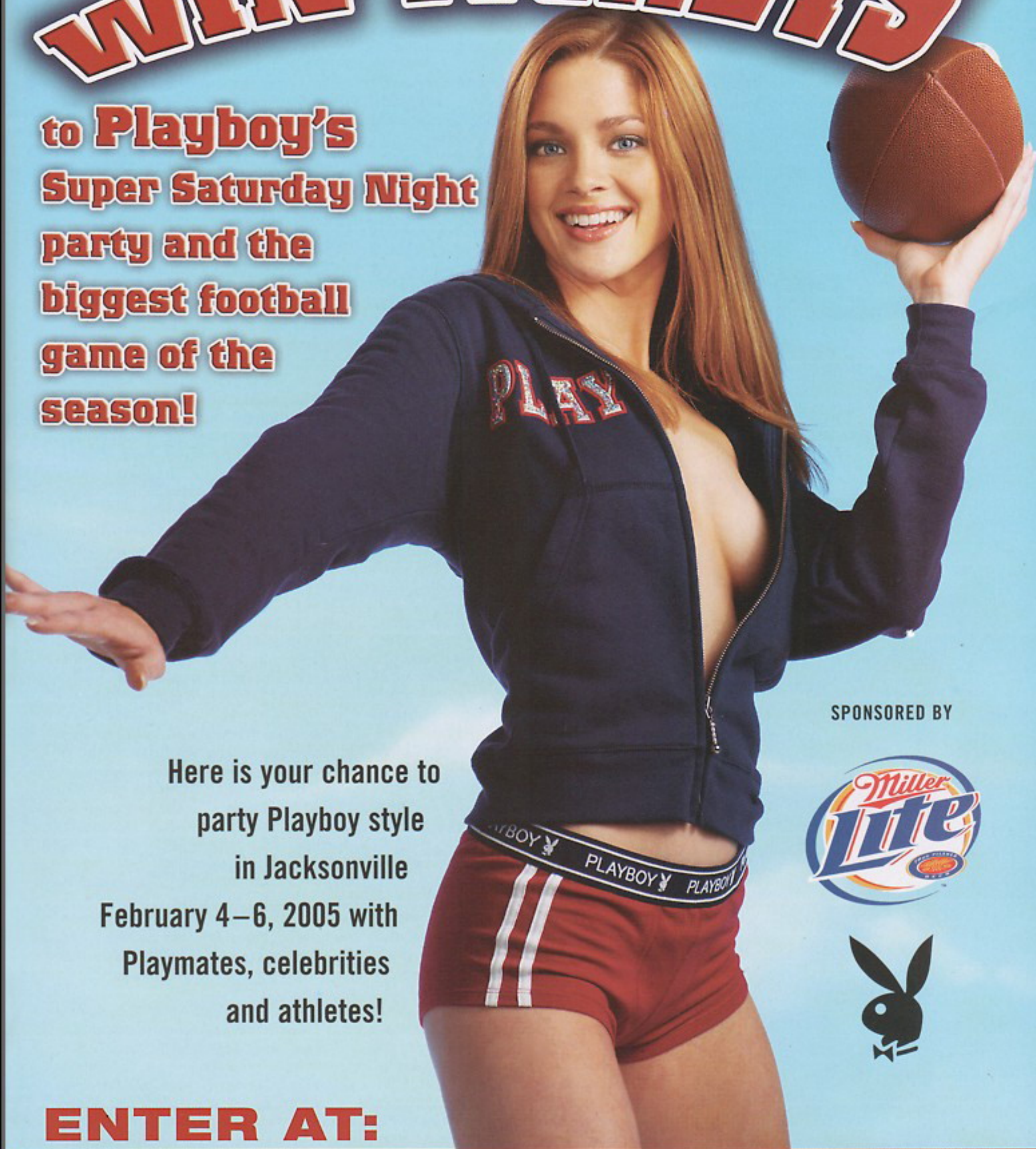
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Olivia  
2003

*"We have a present for you that can't wait until Christmas...!"*



# SEX IN CINEMA 2004

THE MOVIES KEEP EXPLORING THE WORLD'S  
MOST FASCINATING SUBJECT



It's a peculiar year when the three most talked about films—*The Passion of the Christ*, *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Kill Bill Vol. 2*—are virtually sexless. Fortunately, Mel Gibson, Michael Moore and Quentin Tarantino weren't the only directors working. The year's best film about sex was Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Dreamers*, which tells the story of an American and a French brother and sister who discover sex in the politically enraged Paris of 1968. Michael Pitt shows the young American's intelligence and naïveté, and Eva Green demonstrates why it sometimes seems that nothing on earth is more like a goddess than a 19-year-old woman. Much attention fell to Vincent Gallo's *The Brown Bunny*, a strange but frequently dull film most notable for Chloë Sevigny's on-screen fella-

tio. Far more attention should be paid to more provocative and thoughtful films such as Catherine Breillat's *Sex Is Comedy* and Roger Michell's *The Mother*. But sex is too important to be left to philosophers. Sex is fun in *Wimbledon* (featuring a sweaty and fit Kirsten Dunst) and *Eurotrip* (get the unrated version on DVD). For sexy star power, see how Leonardo DiCaprio, Gwen Stefani, Kate Beckinsale and Cate Blanchett portray Hollywood's golden age in *The Aviator*. Charlize Theron, in *Head in the Clouds*, makes us forget how she looked in *Monster*, and Halle Berry makes *Catwoman* worth watching. Finally, recall the face of Diane Kruger, who plays Helen in *Troy*; it may not exactly launch a thousand ships, but surely her marina will never lack for a dinghy.

Gwen Stefani (above) embodies proto-bombshell Jean Harlow in *The Aviator*.





#### **GOT WOOD?**

In *Kinsey* (above), Liam Neeson and Laura Linney, as sex researcher Alfred Kinsey and his wife, appear to be awfully impressed at the sight of a fully erect tongue depressor.

#### **ALL HEAT, NO BURN**

In *Eurotrip* (below left), Edita Deveroux and Petra Tomanková demonstrate standard operating procedure on one of France's many all-female, all-nude beaches.

#### **THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

In *Lost in Translation* (below right), Bill Murray plays a man for whom life has lost all meaning. Then he meets Scarlett Johansson in a Tokyo hotel bar.







### THREE'S A WHAT?

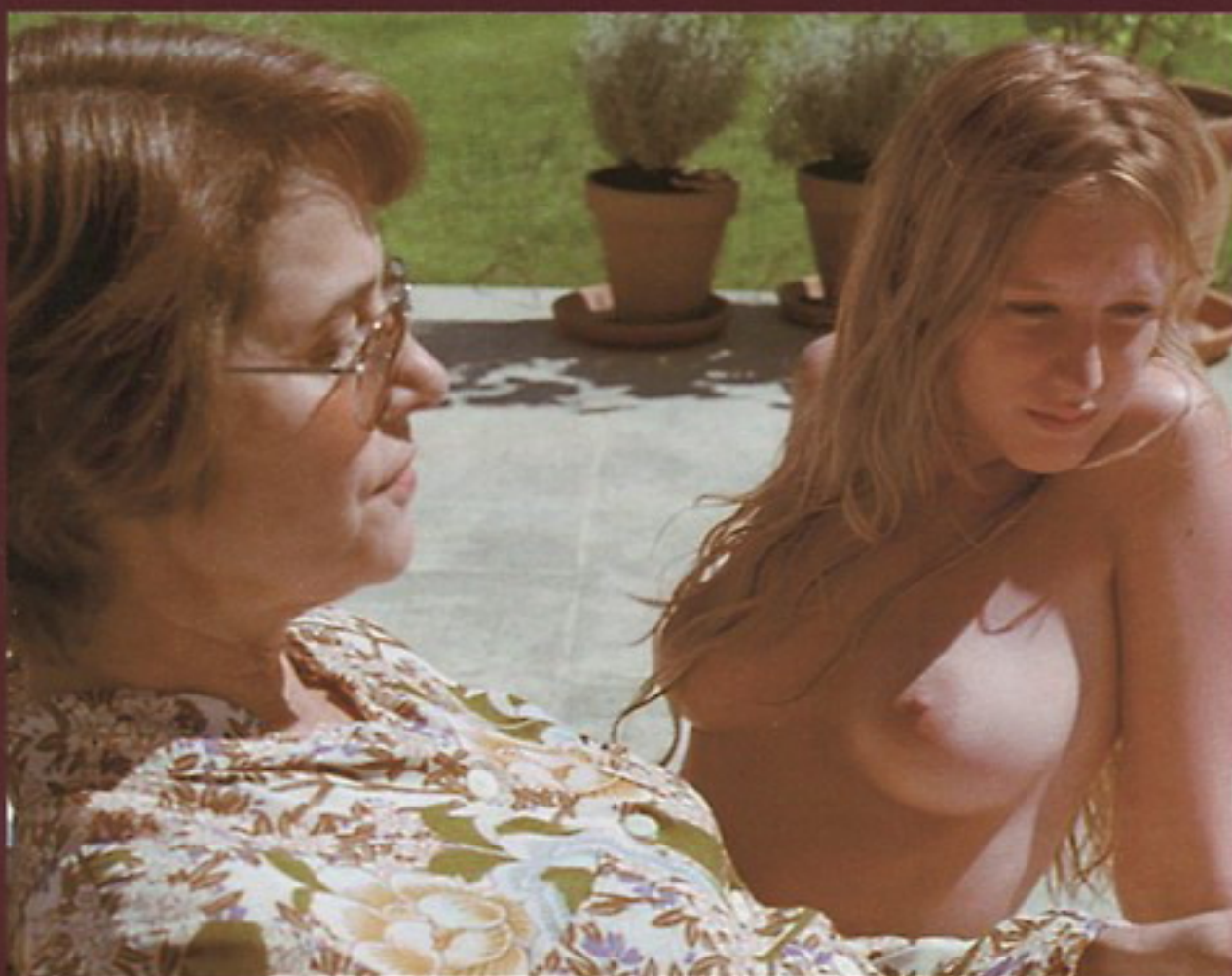
Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* (above, all), with Eva Green, Michael Pitt and Louis Garrel, shows that when you're young and rebellious, three doesn't have to be an odd number.

### CARE FOR A DIP?

In *Swimming Pool* (below left), Charlotte Rampling seems to be perturbed that she is unable to discover any flaws in Ludvine Sagnier's breasts.

### GETTING OUT THE KINKS

In Roger Michell's *The Mother* (below right), grandmotherly Anne Reid has a rejuvenating affair with her daughter's virile lover, the much younger Daniel Craig.







### THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A BAD GIRL

In *Murderous Maids* (top), Sylvie Testud and Julie-Marie Parmentier play a pair of incestuous sisters who decide to murder their employer and her daughter. But their floors are so clean you can eat off them.

### HEY, DO MY FEET STILL SMELL?

In *Head in the Clouds* (middle), which is set in the days prior to World War II, you can tell that Charlize Theron and Stuart Townsend are devil-may-care bon vivants because they wear their lids in the bathtub.

### IT'S HARD TO LOOK ANGRY WHEN YOU'RE NAKED...

Yet in *Thirteen* (bottom left), a movie about a teenage girl's rebellious entry into adolescence, Holly Hunter manages to seem really ticked off.

### I'D WALK A MILE FOR A CAMEL, AND EVEN FARTHER FOR A...

Civil War deserter Jude Law has a long and arduous journey home in *Cold Mountain* (bottom right), but when he gets there, Nicole Kidman provides him with an especially warm welcome.







#### CHEER UP

Why does Naomi Watts (above left) look so sad? Did she have to spend the night on the wet spot? Has she forgotten where she left her clothing? Is she thinking, Should I try to wake up Bret? Or is his name Bart? Or Bradford? Watch *21 Grams* to find out.

#### OUCH!

For a while, rough sex is all fun and games for Ewan McGregor (above right) in *Young Adam*. But the young drifter subsequently reveals himself to be more murderous than sexy. In this scene McGregor appears to be having a hard time folding up his girlfriend.

#### MIXED SIGNALS

We're not exactly sure what's happening in this scene from *Seeing Other People* (below left), but it certainly looks as if Miss December 2001 Shanna Moakler wants to talk and Jay Mohr is thinking, Doesn't she know there's no talking once the bra comes off?

#### THERE'S GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

In Jane Campion's *In the Cut* (below right), writing teacher Meg Ryan seems not to know whether to laugh or cry, a common predicament when one starts to suspect that one's detective boyfriend could actually be a serial killer.







**ANYONE HERE  
GOT A RHYME FOR  
NANTUCKET?**

In Christine Jeffs's *Sylvia* (top left), a biopic that details the tragic story of American poet Sylvia Plath, a contemplative Gwyneth Paltrow appears to be waiting for a visit from her own Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

**THIS CHICK IS  
SSSSMOKIN'...**

Which is how you can tell that Amanda Swisten (top right), who plays an actress of the X-rated variety in *The Girl Next Door*, has naught but disdain for bourgeois morality. Otherwise you couldn't tell the difference between her and Laura Bush.

**IS THAT A PISTOL  
IN YOUR POCKET,  
OR ARE YOU  
A BROTHER?**

In *White Chicks* (bottom left), Marlon Wayans plays a black male FBI agent who disguises himself as a white woman. Here he's on the verge of having his secret identity released into the wild.

**HEY, ISN'T IT  
TIME FOR  
SPONGEBOB?**

We're not sure what Mario Van Peebles and his two delectable friends are looking at in this scene from *Baadasssss!* (bottom right), but aren't these perhaps the three most supremely distractible people on the face of the earth?





#### **PALM READING**

In *Twentynine Palms* (left), Katia Golubeva uses her palm to tell David Wissak that it's okay for him to take off his boots and stay awhile.

#### **HERE, PUSSY PUSSY PUSSY**

*Catwoman* was a dog, but if anyone saw Halle Berry (above) in her cat suit and didn't think *purr-fect*, then they just don't know word one about bad puns.



#### **"AT WHICH POINT HEF SAYS, 'WHERE THE HELL WERE ALL THE BUNNIES?'"**

In *The Brown Bunny* (left), Chloë Sevigny kisses Vincent Gallo's lips early on in a scene that will inevitably be mentioned in every article that will ever be written about the movie.

#### **BELIEVE IT OR NOT**

In *The Human Stain* (above left and right), Robert Benton's film version of the Philip Roth novel, viewers have to suspend disbelief enough to accept that Anthony Hopkins could be an African American and—even more of a stretch—that Nicole Kidman could be a janitor.





#### WHO'S ON FIRST?

In Catherine Breillat's *Sex Is Comedy* (above), Roxane Mesquida and Grégoire Colin ponder their choices. Should they slip on a banana peel, start a fight or make love?

#### GRAB 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM

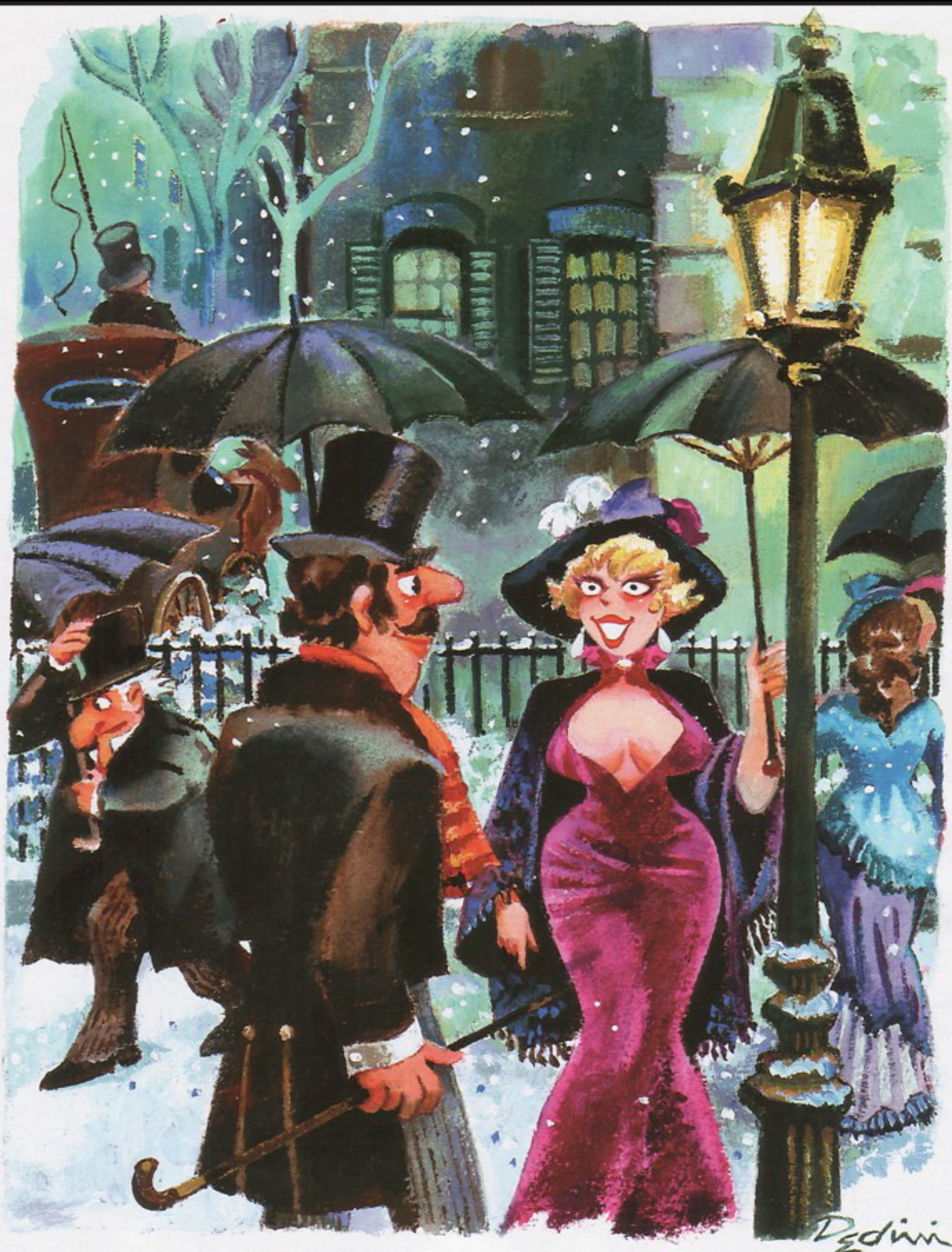
*13 Going On 30* is a film about a girl who wakes up to find she's 30 years old. Jennifer Garner (left) is delighted to discover she has developed breasts. As are we all.

#### "I TOLD YOU NEVER TO CALL ME WHEN I'M WAITING!"

In *Heights* (below), Jesse Bradford passes out pigs in blankets at what appears to be your run-of-the-mill Republican fund-raiser.



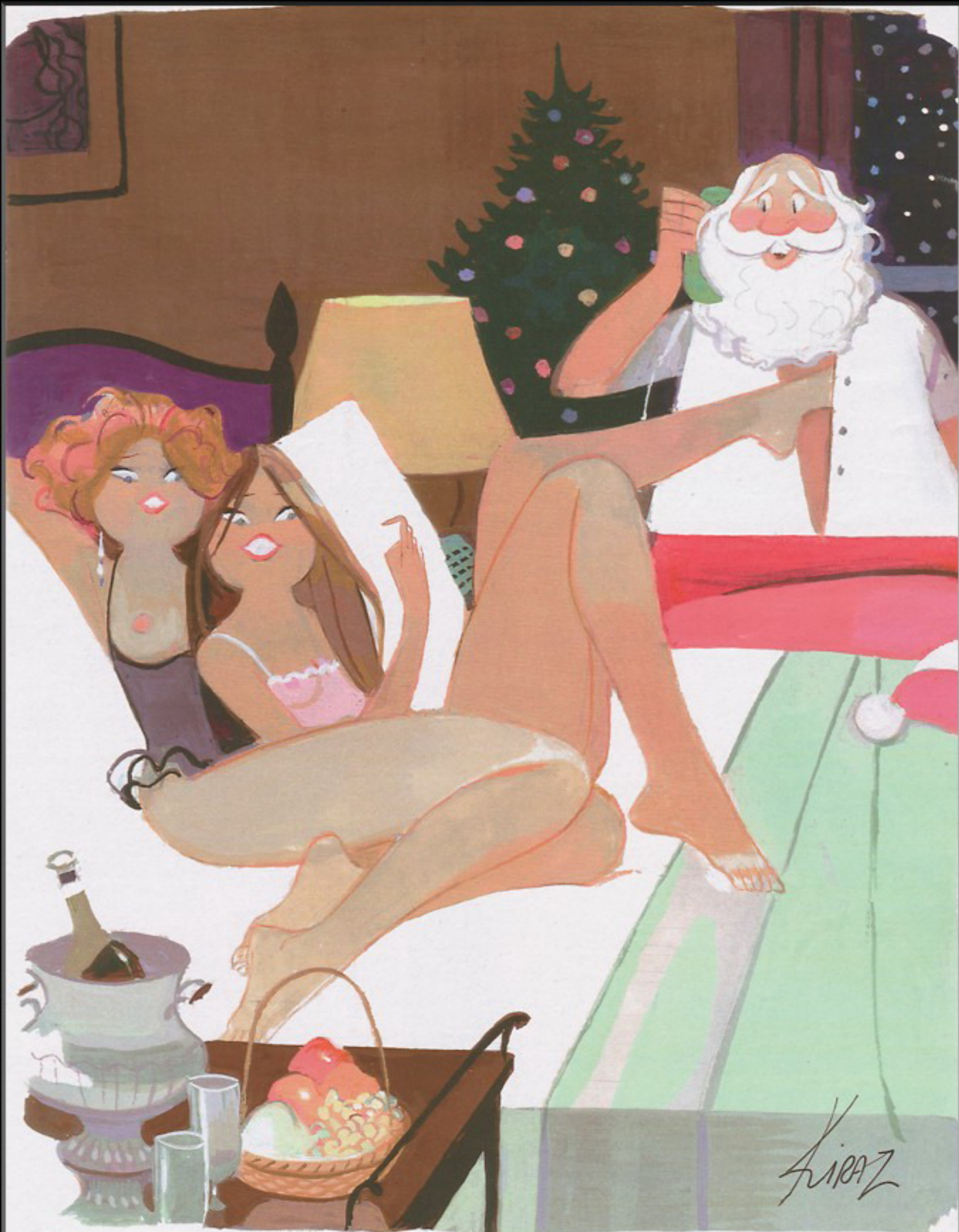




Dediwin

*"Well, don't you think impulse purchases are the most fun?!"*





*"And cancel all my other appointments until after the first of the year."*

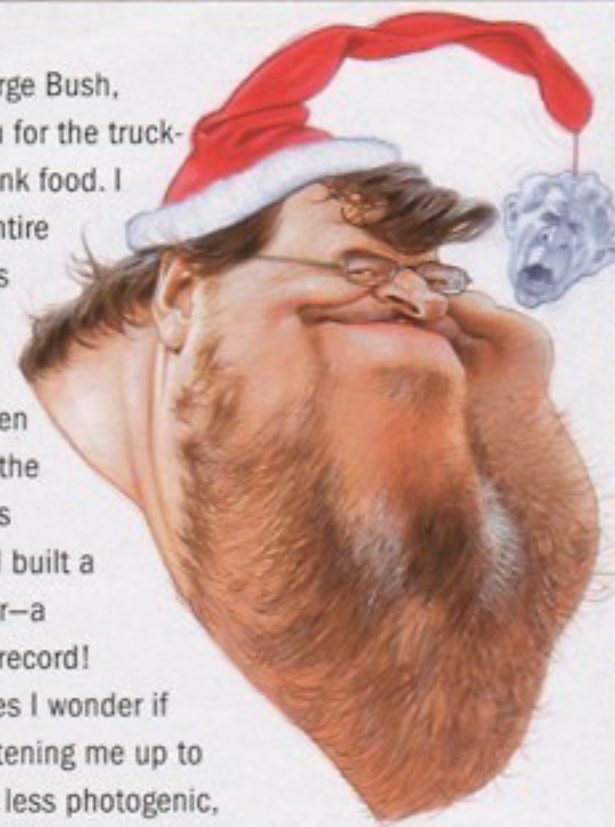


# OH, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE!

Sometimes a  
simple thank-you  
note can  
say it all

Dear George Bush,  
Thank you for the truck-  
load of junk food. I  
ate the entire  
Whitman's  
Sampler  
in one  
sitting, then  
I took all the  
Moon Pies  
apart and built a  
17-decker—a  
personal record!  
Sometimes I wonder if  
you're fattening me up to  
make me less photogenic,  
which would enhance my raving-  
lunatic persona, which would discredit my movies,  
which would make the Iraq war look like a good  
idea, which would make you look like a good presi-  
dent. Nah—couldn't be. Just being paranoid, I guess.  
Big daddy has a sweet tooth—keep it coming.

Michael



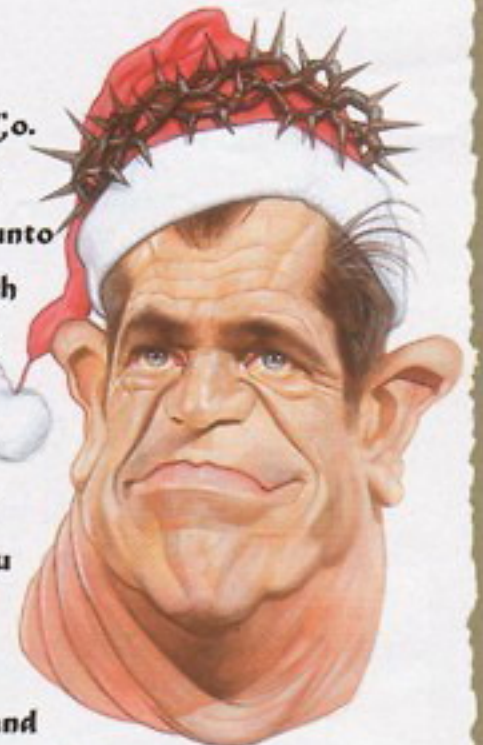
Dear Paris,  
Thanks for being the maid of honor at my quickie  
Vegas wedding. Being married is neat, even if I  
don't understand half the shit my 33-year-old Ivy  
League groom says. Who is this Zelda Fitzger-  
ald he keeps comparing me to? Whatever. You  
stood by me during my  
engagement—it was a  
tough 45 minutes, espe-  
cially since I was so  
wasted. Wait till  
you see the videos we  
made on our honey-  
moon—they make  
your tape look like  
Joanie Loves Chachi.  
My elbows are still sore.

Love,  
Nicky



Dear Jesus,  
Happy birthday! Lo.  
I beseech you, my  
Lord. And give unto  
thee thanks for such  
a wonderfully holy  
and—how  
shall I put  
this?—spiritually  
lucrative year. You  
saw fit to bestow  
upon me health,  
wisdom, serenity and  
roughly \$370 million in box office gross.  
Amen to that! Praise Jesus, for he is  
good! He is very good! I spendeth much in  
thy honor on whatever the hell I want! Lo.  
And in this note I give unto thee thanks.

Love,  
Mel Gibson

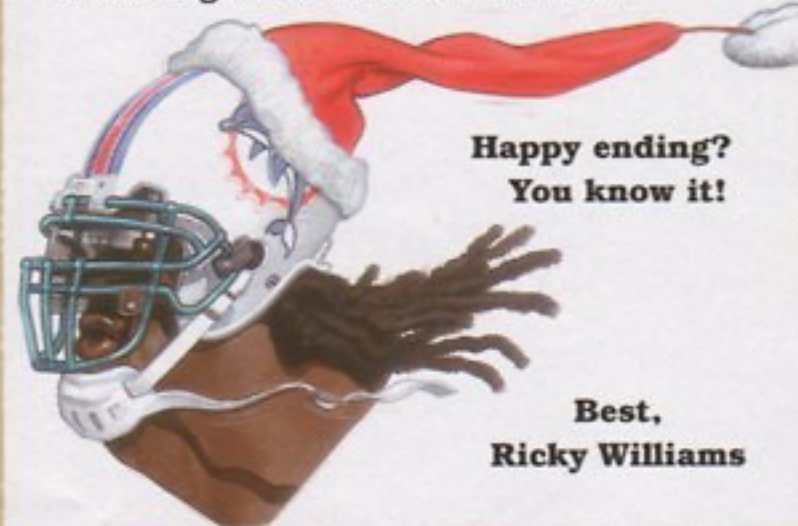


Dear  
Genetics,  
Thank you for the  
boobs! YES, they  
FIT!!! I use them  
every day. I did  
Jimmy Kimmel's  
show, and he stared  
at my boobs! I did  
The View, and Joy  
Behar stared at my  
boobs! I did the  
MTV Awards,  
and the whole planet  
stared at my boobs! My boobs rule! People thought the  
Olsen twins were such hot jailbait until—bazoom! Old  
guys everywhere are all staring at my boobs, especially  
now that I'm legal! I win! I win!

♥ Lindsay Lohan



Dear Coach Wannstedt,  
I'm so stoned! Holiday greetings from  
Asia! Thanks for all the times when,  
after I was pulverized by some 400-  
pound lineman, you called me a panty-  
waist or a girlie man. If not for that, I  
wouldn't be here in Bangkok smoking  
hash with this really hot naked girl!  
(See enclosed photo.) Yesterday I  
prayed with the Dalai Lama. He's a  
renowned holy man who you'd probably  
call a bald-headed pussy. I love that!  
Boy, do I miss having my ribs cracked  
all the time! This afternoon I'm getting  
a massage from Miss Cambodia.



Happy ending?  
You know it!

Best,  
Ricky Williams



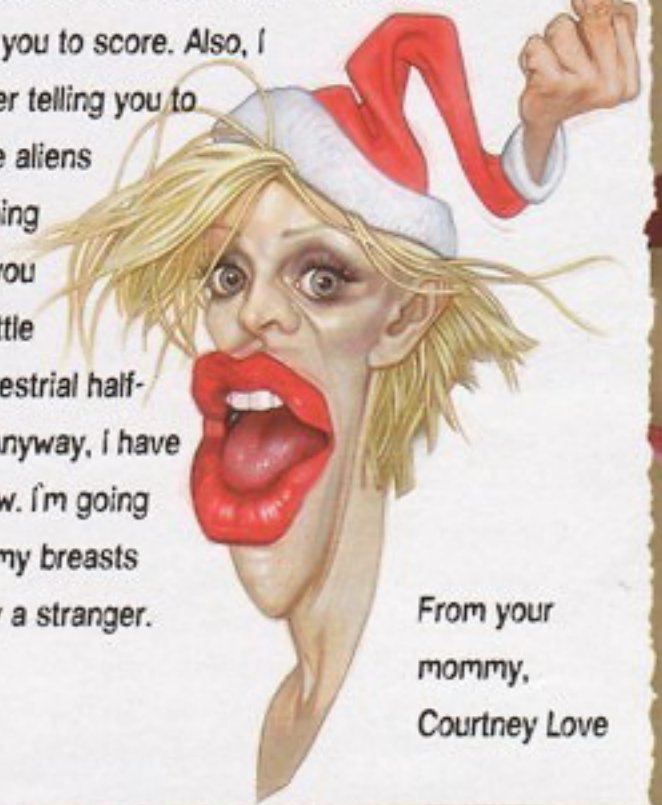
Dear Doc,  
Happy Hanukkah, and thanks  
again for the methyl-  
chlorosolophaniminine  
and the megapropostali-  
zonyninol. The French  
and Germans are right, as  
always. They just have  
no idea how much I  
cheat! The other day  
I cut my finger

accidentally and green goo poured out! How cool is  
that? Also, Sheryl wanted to thank you for that age-  
reversing serum. Who knew she was actually 72 years  
old? She's a little piece of chicken, ain't she? Here's to  
another year of fun and games.

Best,  
Lance Armstrong

Dear little Frannie Bananie,  
Thanks so much for your handmade card and poem.  
You're getting so grown up! I love and miss you, baby,  
but this is not what I asked for. Remember when I said  
either horse or blow? I can't snort a poem. You at least  
could have gotten me those little green pills. You're  
the daughter of two rock stars—it should be  
easy for you to score. Also, I  
remember telling you to  
make the aliens  
stop boning  
me! Do you  
want a little  
extraterrestrial half-  
sister? Anyway, I have  
to go now. I'm going  
to have my breasts  
licked by a stranger.

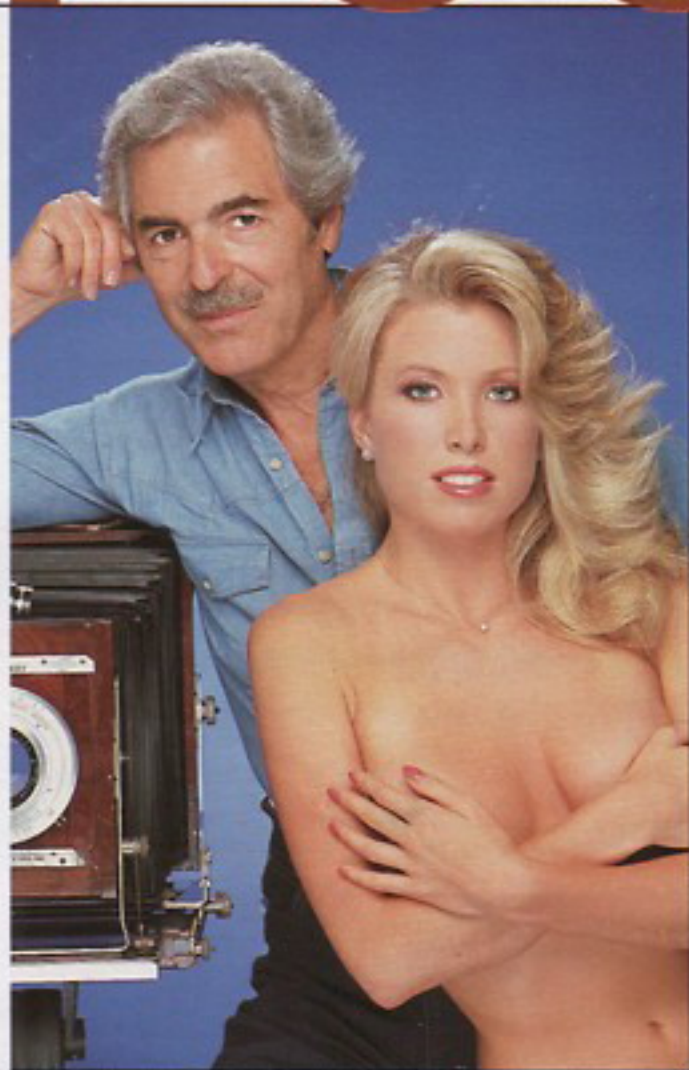
From your  
mommy,  
Courtney Love





A MASTER OF CHARM, HE COULD TALK A WOMAN OUT OF HER CLOTHES

# REMEMBERING POMPEO POSAR



**P**ompeo Posar was the dean of PLAYBOY photographers, with 65 published Playmate Centerfolds and 40 PLAYBOY covers to his credit. He traveled the world for the magazine, shooting celebrities, fashion, food, cars and, most of all, beautiful women. Thousands of beautiful women. He loved them, and they loved him. His greatest talent wasn't his technical expertise with cameras and lights. It was his charm.

Posar was born in the Adriatic port city of Trieste, on the border of Yugoslavia and Italy. In early 1960 he took his camera to a local television station in Chicago to photograph a show about folk dancing. Hugh Hefner and the original *Playboy's Penthouse* TV show were being filmed on an adjacent stage. Posar used the opportunity to take photos of Hefner and his guests and eventually sent the pictures to Hef. Soon Posar was working as a staff photographer for the magazine, and he quickly emerged as PLAYBOY's number one photographer of women.

Now he is gone. We'll carry on with the job of photographing beautiful women, but Pompeo Posar will not be replaced. He was one of a kind and truly the prince of PLAYBOY photography.

Posar was a master with the large-format 8 x 10 Deardorff camera (above). Expressive Donna Michelle (top) was PLAYBOY's December 1963 Playmate. Posar found Playmate Patti McGuire (right) in the St. Louis Playboy Club, where she worked as a Bunny. Opposite page: A collaboration with Salvador Dalí, *The Erotic World of Salvador Dalí* (1974).







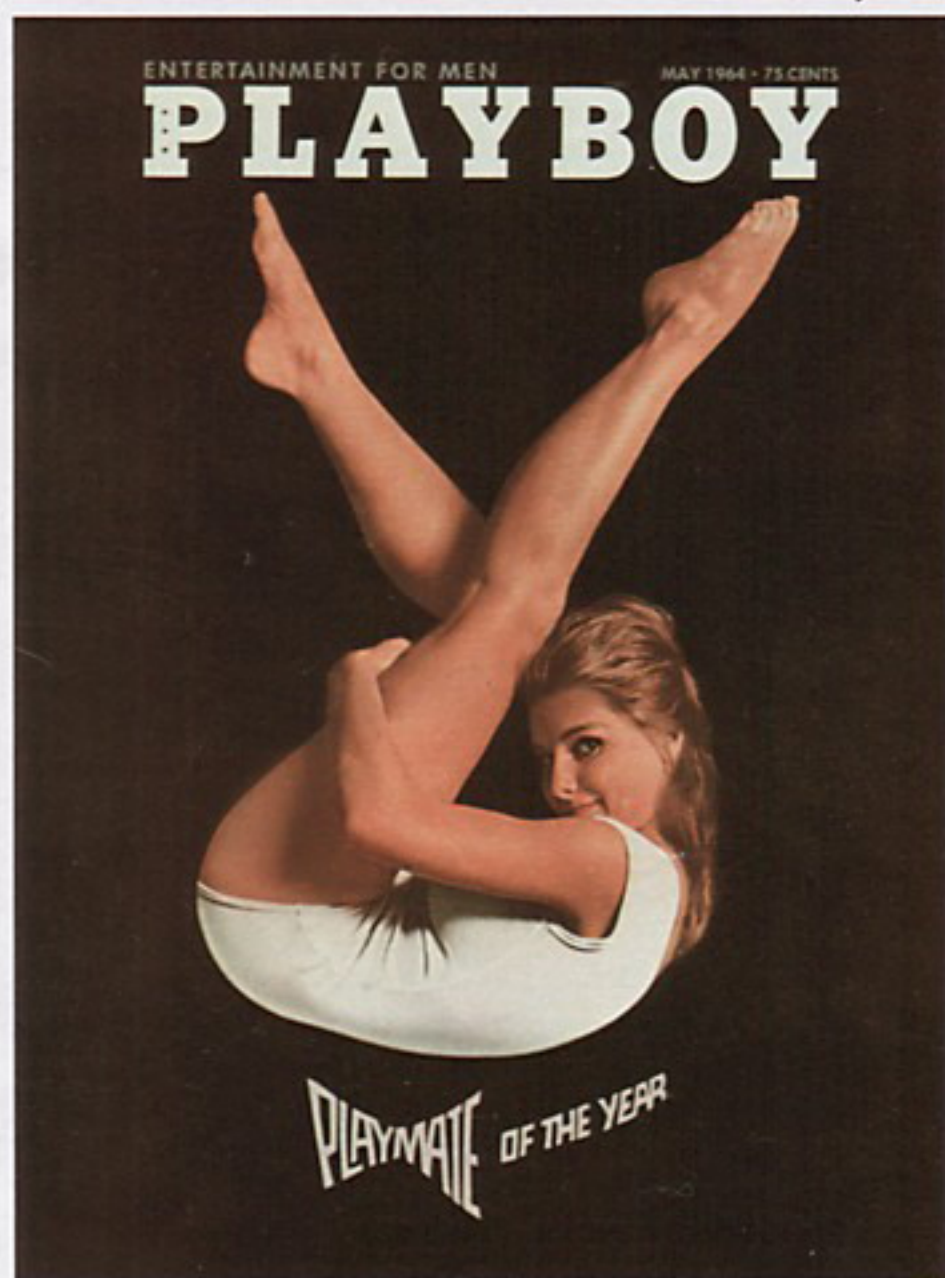




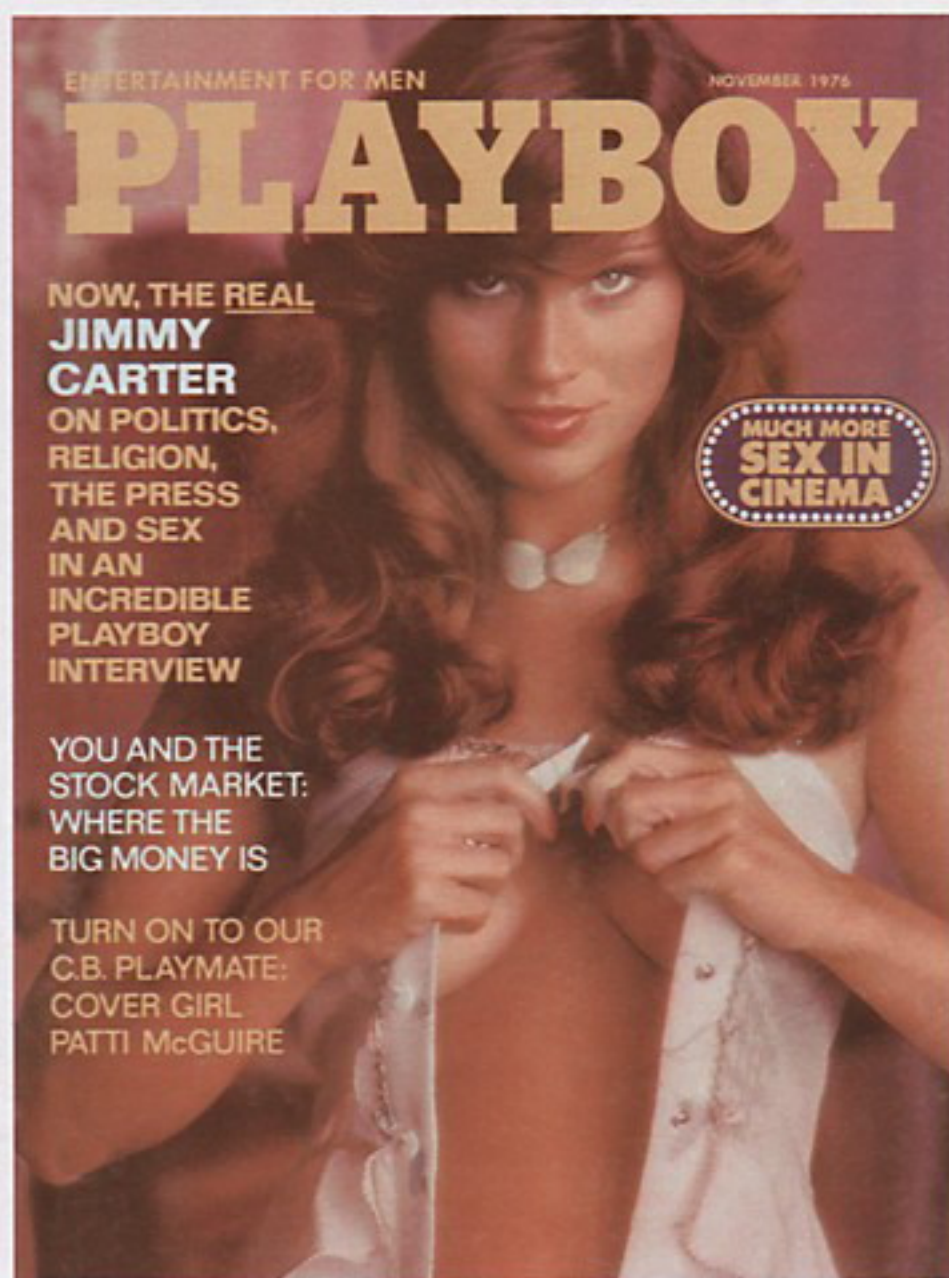
Beth Hyatt Cover, November 1965



Helen Kirk Cover, February 1967



Donna Michelle Cover, May 1964



Patti McGuire Cover, November 1976





Donna Michelle Playmate of the Year 1964





**Laura Young** Centerfold, October 1962



**Cyndi Wood** Centerfold, February 1973

**Patti McGuire** Centerfold, November 1976







# TALES

of  
ACCUMULATION & EXCESS

## The INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES

of the

# COLLECTOR

by Glen David Gold



WHEN YOU'RE WILLING TO PAY \$10,000 FOR COMIC-BOOK PANELS, YOU TEND TO BECOME OBSESSED. TOO OBSESSED.

ON ONE EVENING IN 1997, a comic-book artwork restorer named Rick returned to me a piece I'd sent him more than a year earlier. He returned it only under duress. More precisely, he was limping and had a black eye.

When I'd given him the cover of *Captain America* #117—which featured the initial appearance of one of the first African American superheroes, the Falcon—he said he would have it back in three weeks. Three weeks became six, then a year, and then I got a phone call from someone who trafficked in comic-book-artwork rumors. Rick, I was quietly informed, had been helping himself to some of the pieces with which he'd been entrusted, and he'd finally taken high-end material from a man who had ugly connections, a man who now owned Rick. If I wanted my art back, I should call a phone number with an area code encompassing a somewhat northern area of New Jersey.

When I did so, a polite voice on the other end told me I'd get my art back in 48 hours. "We simply have to remind Rick he can be touched," the voice explained. Click.





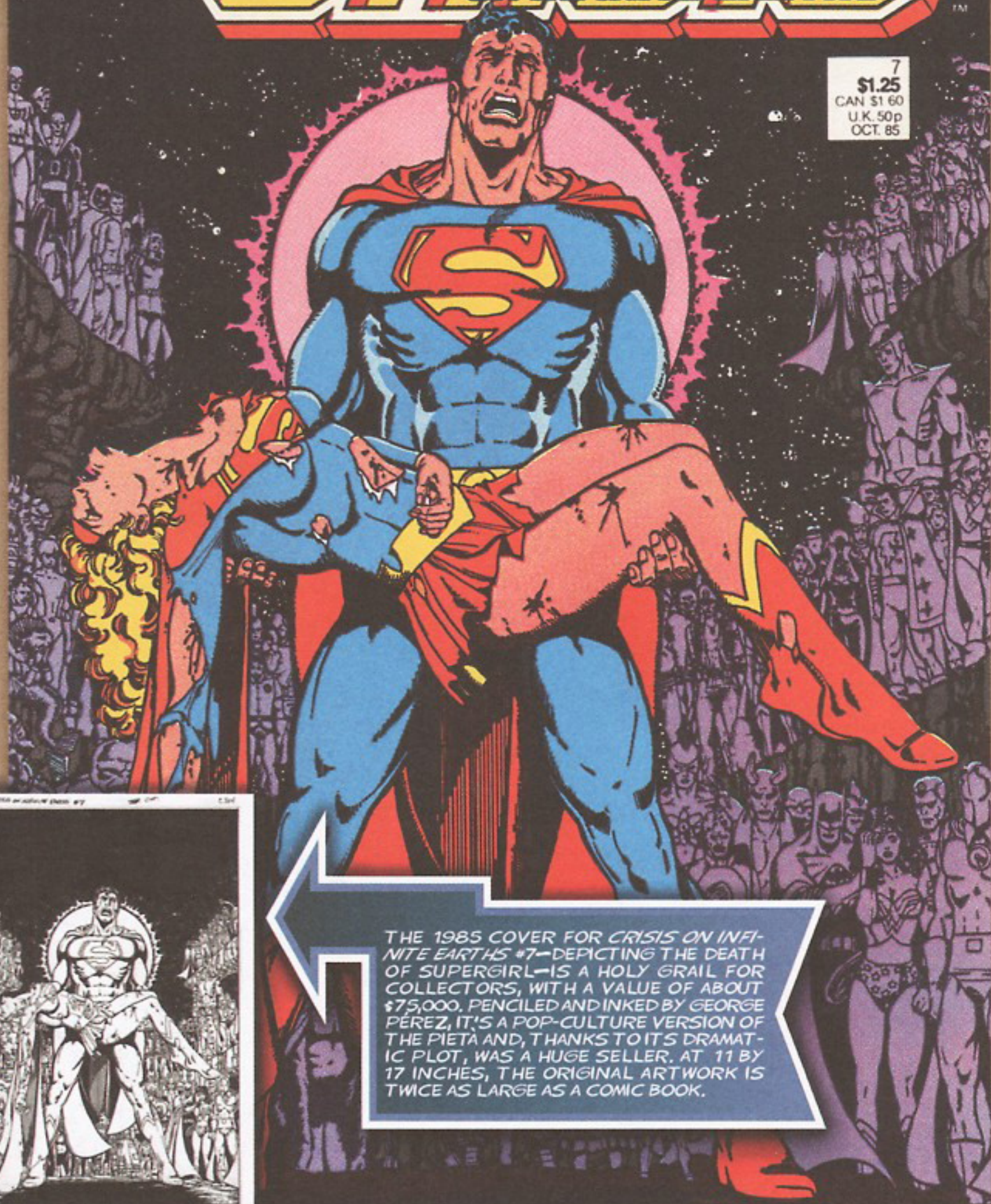
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THIS IS IT! **DOUBLE-SIZE SHOCKER!**

# CRISIS

ON INFINITE EARTHS

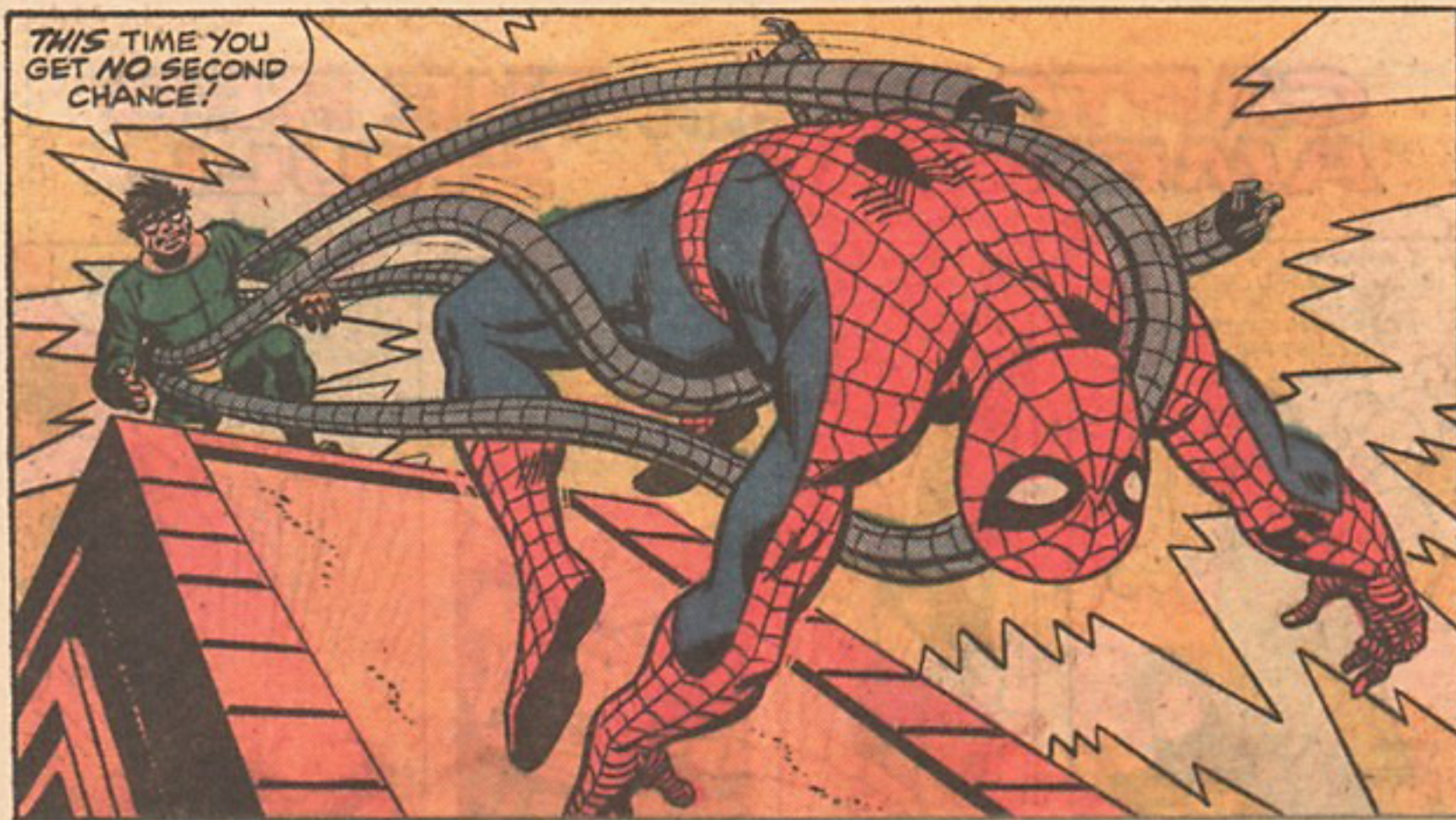
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THE 1985 COVER FOR *CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS* #7—DEPICTING THE DEATH OF SUPERGIRL—IS A HOLY GRAIL FOR COLLECTORS, WITH A VALUE OF ABOUT \$75,000. PENCILED AND INKED BY GEORGE PEREZ, IT'S A POP-CULTURE VERSION OF THE PIETA AND, THANKS TO ITS DRAMATIC PLOT, WAS A HUGE SELLER. AT 11 BY 17 INCHES, THE ORIGINAL ARTWORK IS TWICE AS LARGE AS A COMIC BOOK.







IN THIS FAMOUS BATTLE, SPIDER-MAN TAKES ON DR. OCTOPUS. PENCILED BY GIL KANE AND INKED BY JOHN ROMITA IN 1970, IT ENDS WITH THE DEATH OF GWEN STACY'S FATHER. NOTE THE CONTORTIONS, FORESHORTENING AND IMPOSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES OF THE IMAGES. GOT THE BUG? GO TO [GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/COMICART-L](http://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/COMICART-L) FOR COLLECTOR CONTACTS, AND TO [WIZARDUNIVERSE.COM/CONVENTIONS](http://WIZARDUNIVERSE.COM/CONVENTIONS) AND [COMIC-CON.ORG](http://COMIC-CON.ORG) FOR INFO ON SHOWS.



NEXT ISSUE **AND DEATH DOES COME!!**



And so Rick showed up at my neighborhood Starbucks two days later holding the newly restored *Captain America* cover in its Mylar sleeve, looking as if he was about to cry and turning his black eye away from me.

"They said they were going to break my legs," he whispered. "Please don't call them again." I assured him I wouldn't. But for me it was in one ear and out the other: The important thing was that he'd removed the glue residue and staining from my artwork.

As he limped to his car, I kept holding the cover up to the cafe lights to admire it. Great cover. Subtle Gene Colan pencils, bold Joe Sinnott inks, dramatic staging of the Falcon, Cap and some low-rent villains. Absolutely worth the thousand bucks it had cost in the first place, the \$200 to restore it and the efforts I'd made to get it back.

When I told my girlfriend about all this, she was horrified. I'd found out that the black eye wasn't because of my phone call but had appeared courtesy of yet another client whose stuff Rick had stolen, but she wasn't mollified. "What are you getting yourself into?" she asked, and I couldn't exactly answer her.

*USA Today* once published a pie chart showing what keeps people up at night—career worries, their children's future. I couldn't sleep some nights because I wondered where all the pre-1965 twice-up Marvel Comics covers were. Why wouldn't Walt Simonson sell his *Thor* art? Why did only unpublished H.G. Peter *Wonder Woman* pages turn up?

For reasons not entirely explicable, I buy, sell and trade the artwork from comic books. This is embarrassing. I would like to pretend the embarrassment is mitigated by the new respect paid to comics via Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth* and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, but citing those names is rather like rattling off champagne vintages in some half-slurred defense of my prone position in the local gutter. Tom Field, a friend who thought he could stop collecting after buying one *Tomb of Dracula*

page (he now has 175 of them), has quantified the hobby for me: Comic books, even rare ones, exist in multiple copies. But there's only one of each page of original artwork. If comic books are like cocaine, artwork is like crack.

For years, when a comic artist sat down at his table, the drawings he penciled and inked were valued only until the funnies were printed; then they could be discarded or, as King Features allegedly did with *Prince Valiant* artwork, used to plug a leaky roof. Over the years, employees spirited thousands of pages out of publishers' warehouses, either because they loved the stuff or because they realized they could sell it to a slowly growing fan base. By the mid-1970s, when comics themselves were becoming valuable, artists got their work back contractually and sold it to people like me.

THIS CLASSIC COVER FROM MARVEL COMICS' SILVER AGE, WITH JACK KIRBY PENCILS AND JOE SINNOTT INKS, IS WORTH \$75,000.



My origin story, lame by any standard, fits the pattern of my peers. I read comic books from 1972 to 1977, from the age of eight to the age of 13, when my parents' divorce was at its most ruthless. The three-second psychoanalysis is exactly correct: I remember those four-color funny books as friendly islands of solace during painful times. When I shuttled to my father's new home in Chicago and he held hands with his new wife, it was easier for me to pay strict attention to the latest Marvel Treasury Edition. When I was back in San Francisco and my mother was out on a date, I would stay up reading and rereading the gloomy and unsettling *Giant-Size Man Thing* #4 until I heard her key in the lock, and then I'd slap off the light and pretend to be asleep.

I did odd jobs and collected soda bottles in the summer of 1977, and in August of that year I went to a comic-book convention and bought page 30 of *Fantastic Four* #183 for \$12. And there the awful slope began. By 1997 I was buying up to \$9,000 worth of art at a time. I should mention that I was a graduate student then, making \$12,000 a year. I managed because I had an outstanding talent for playing credit cards—I was the John Coltrane of balance transfers.

Though this is clearly insane, my father has always understood it. Dad—who at the age of 73 cruises eBay for scientific instruments, watches and slide rules—has passed to me whatever defective gene treasures material things above the company of people. But collecting never actually makes you happy, except for a moment. All collectors, including myself, are programmed to forget this at key moments, such as when a new object appears before our now occluded vision. Right before doing a deal, we have the anxiety, the sweaty palms, the desire. After the deal there's the swaggering feeling of having bagged a trophy: the careful admiration of the pen work, the drafting, the heroic poses, the subtle details—half-erased pencil marks, margin notes, the Comics Code Authority stamp—and the production detritus such as Wite-Out, pasteups, "continued page after next" stats, the coffee-like stain of printer's ink. And then, when it goes into your portfolio or onto the wall, there's this creeping urge, a need for more. It's a little like the most (continued on page 200)

BELOW, TWO LANDMARK ISSUES. THE ARTWORK OF THE 1981 X-MEN SPLASH PAGE (JOHN BYRNE PENCILS, TERRY AUSTIN INKS) RUNS ABOUT \$35,000. SPIDER-MAN'S DEATH OF OWEN STACY (RIGHT) WAS PENCILS BY GIL KANE, INKS BY JOHN ROMITA AND A PRICE TAG OF \$250,000 FOR THE WHOLE BOOK.



BLACK GOLIATH #5, FEATURING GIL KANE PENCILS AND AL MILEROM INKS, IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF 1970S BLAX-PLOTATION ARTWORK. PRICE? \$2,500.



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# BATMAN

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 A **NEW** BATMAN  
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TRADED RECENTLY FOR ABOUT \$55,000, THE 11-BY-17-INCH PANEL ABOVE IS THE LAST BATMAN COVER PENCILED AND INKED BY NEAL ADAMS (HE OFTEN INSISTED ON INKING HIS OWN PENCIL WORK). BATMAN WAS DARK AND NOIRISH IN THE 1940S, THEN TOOK ON A CAMPY TONE IN THE 1960S DUE TO THE TV SHOW. WITH HIS ABILITY TO PORTRAY ANGUISH AND STRAIN, ADAMS RETURNED THE COMIC TO ITS DARK ROOTS. THE LACK OF TYPE AND CAPTIONS ADDS TO THIS PIECE'S ARTISTIC MERIT.

S-1299



# COLLECTOR

(continued from page 125)

shameful side of sex. When a man buys art from me and has it shipped to his office, he's usually hiding it from his wife, as though it were a mistress. At comic-book conventions, you can spot the collector who has completely displaced his desires, the guy who cranes his neck to look past the gorgeous women in scanty costumes to better see the display of Sunday *Pogo* pages.

Such sightings are few lately, as the Internet has supplanted the convention floor. The online Comcart-1 discussion group has more than 1,700 members, and we swoon over, or seethe about, one another's acquisitions. There is boasting and swaggering and jealousy and the occasional burst of camaraderie, all done via unbreachable virtual intimacy. The most pathetic moments occur when collectors try to share tangential passions—for model trains, animation cels or (as I once mistakenly did) old magic posters. There follows some polite response, but a pall hangs over the discussion, as if someone in a perfectly good leg-fetish forum had said, "Hey, guys, what about jugs?"

I once asked if anyone bought art not because they wanted to but because they felt they needed to buy something. You could almost hear online crickets chirping.



My best friend in this racket is Will Gabri-El, 34, whom I've known for a decade. We've never met. Maybe that's hard to imagine if you're not a collector, but we don't need to meet—I know how he does deals, and that's a full Rorschach personality test. He's got a calm demeanor, speaks carefully, can do long division in his head and plays his cards close to his chest. It took me years just to find out what he looks like (he turns out to be a handsome guy in the mode of Prince). He enjoys standing in the shadows, quietly helping people make deals from the sidelines, though his online persona is aggressive, especially when it comes to John Byrne artwork. He reminds me of my cousin, who is as gentle and calm as a Zen master until someone stands between him and his morning cigarette.

Will and I are friends because we egg on each other's obsessions. In one six-month period I called every comic-book store in 24 states, about 1,000 places. I found three pieces of art, and though you might think I was an idiot—1,000 phone calls?—I received heartfelt congratulations from Will: Three pieces! Cool! In return I encourage him when he's spending three or four times the going amount, crazy money, on pages from *Fantastic Four* #243. "Will, what are you going to do?



It's Galactus versus everybody. You gotta have it, man."

Bragging rights evolve from the difficulty of a deal, the intransigence of the seller, the hoops through which people jump. Mike Burkey, the world's foremost collector of *Spider-Man* artwork, a guy who is single-minded even by my standards, loves the artist John Romita and wants to own at least one page of artwork from every issue from Romita's heyday, *Amazing Spider-Man* #39-132. Another collector had the complete *Amazing Spider-Man* #121 (the death of Spider-Man's girlfriend Gwen Stacy), which at the time was worth about \$3,000. The collector would sell only if Burkey located and gave him a specific \$10,000 piece of art available only as part of a \$50,000 package.

For the deal itself, Burkey drove eight hours from Ohio to New York, then his car—rather, his father's car—broke down, then Burkey borrowed a car from the guy he was doing the deal with, got lost in a blizzard on the way home, plowed into a snowbank, ended up snowed in at a motel, called in sick to work for four days and paid \$2,000 for a new transmission. But now Burkey has the complete *Amazing Spider-Man* #121. "That was my best deal," he tells me.

Burkey exemplifies the terrible balance between loving stuff and loving people. Recently he e-mailed to Comicart-1 a chilling note about his engagement and its doom. Two months before the wedding day, the girl dumped him, cleaned out his bank accounts and sold a house he'd helped restore. She then married another guy—on the very day she had planned to marry Burkey. But Burkey didn't feel too embittered toward her, because a certain line was never crossed: "If we'd gotten married," he wrote, "and she tried to take *any* part of my *Spider-Man* collection, the kid gloves would have come off! *Seriously!*"

On the non-wedding day, his family took him out to nurse his wounds. "I decided to call John Romita on my cell phone, and my entire family and a few friends all got to talk to him one by one for about 45 minutes total! It was a blast!"

•

Somehow, though, the relief Burkey felt while talking to his hero makes me queasy. What's the moral of a story that begins with a woman dumping you and ends with your passing a cell phone around so your family can talk to the man who drew the funny books you read as a child? It seems like the outer edges of a bog that Swamp Thing himself would find depressing.

A couple of years ago the downside of this hobby started bothering me. The bright sparks I felt when acquiring artwork didn't help. I kept thinking about the emptiness I saw in some of my peers'

eyes, about how one guy had a dealer meet him at his current residence, a homeless shelter.

My father sent me a copy of Werner Muensterberger's *Collecting: An Unruly Passion*, a psychoanalytic treatise on collectors. I found it devastating. Muensterberger argues that, for collectors, items become invested with *mana*, or magical power, the way a teddy bear or any transitional object does for a child. Teddy won't leave you when Mom does. Teddy will protect you from the darkness. Eventually, since people—like Burkey's ex-fiancée—fail you, having the best damned teddy bear on the block can be your reason to get out of bed in the morning.

Muensterberger concludes that, regardless of what is being collected, "the objects are all ultimate, often unconscious, assurances against despair and loneliness." And unfortunately, no stockpile of bears is ever good enough. The despair always returns.

Viewed through that black lens, the discussions on Comicart-1 veer past the pathetic and into the bleak. Around Christmastime last year, a San Francisco collector named Bill Howard announced it was his 49th birthday, a celebration made melancholy by his chronic lymphocytic leukemia: "I get to spend the day with the drip, drip, drip of chemo, but what the heck. I'm still kickin', and there's always Comic-1 to help relieve the days of recovery."

There was a funereal gloom to this, and as I read the respectful responses, they felt like condolence cards, black-bordered announcements. No matter how much art you owned, you couldn't turn back your mortality. It was a grim day.

But then a guy named Jon Mankuta posted a response: "*Happy birthday, buddy! I've taken your house key...and I sealed off your garage and filled it with Jell-O, so we have a wrestling ring. Candy and Tanya installed a trapeze over your new vibrating, heart-shaped water bed. In the kitchen, there's a big cage filled with 43 ferrets. Be carefull [sic], they've been dipped up to their necks in warm vasaline [sic] (I'll get to that later...).*"

And so on. Mankuta, a frequent poster to the list, had outdone himself. Midgets, dildos, Hostess Twinkies—a long-winded dumb joke whose vitality was so wrong it was right. His jolly giving the finger to death shook me up. Maybe I was wrong to think the hobby was a kind of pathology. Maybe it was just fun, and the addiction and the 12-stepping was my gilding the psychological lily, finding problems where no problems actually existed.

•

Which brings me in a larger way to Mankuta, whom, God help me, I envy in a certain way. I've met him numerous times, and he's hard to ignore. He's an



absurd clotheshorse, sporting pirate shirts and trendy pants. His looks are average (his most defining characteristic is his relatively curly, preened-over black hair), but he has the confidence of a rock star. We on Comicart-I know each and every detail of his love life. He dates strippers and has "friendships with benefits" with various other women. We've heard how, when he brings a woman to his home in his Porsche 928S, she sees on arrival a Mercedes CLK 320 coupe in the driveway of a nearly all-glass house that, to Mankuta's eyes, is rather like a starship. But I do not envy him his sartorial splendor, his cars or his women.

No, the key to Mankuta is in his house, for when he has a woman over she lies in a bed flanked by six-foot posters of 1940s comic-book covers. Mankuta made them himself, cutting and pasting blown-up photocopies to create life-size Spectre, Doctor Fate and Sub-Mariner figures. And in the closet is the heart of his passion: portfolios stuffed with 400 pieces of original comic-book artwork.

Yet even this isn't what I envy the most about him—it's his attitude. Mankuta is a man profoundly untroubled by anything.

When I've gone to the San Diego Comic Book Convention, I've increasingly watched Mankuta as if he were my alter ego. He is always good-natured, juvenile and relentlessly self-promoting. Walking through crowds as if flashbulbs were going off in his face, he pulls out his portfolio, usually with some idiotic quip and an eye on some slinky babe across the room dressed as Vampirella. Unlike most collectors, he sees the women and—holy moley!—even talks to them. (His banter is idiotic but sincere; for reasons I don't claim to understand, at least one woman in 20 seems to respond well.) He has no worries about spending four hours at a time standing in front of a folding table, trying like hell to trade two *Shogun Warriors* covers for a Herb Trimpe *Hulk* cover so he can turn it around and get that *Godzilla* cover off someone else.

I can't help wondering, Is it possible that Mankuta, who calls himself the David Lee Roth of comic-book collecting, actually does this with the same angst that I do?

That just doesn't seem likely.

He is eager to be studied, explaining to me that, first, attention in a national magazine will alert people to his want list, and second, he figures it can advance his acting career. One evening on the phone, I read Mankuta a quotation from Muensterberger about controlling loss and despair. It's like talking to my dog. On the other side of the conversation is a friendly intelligence that in no way speaks my language. "No," he finally says, "I don't look at my art that way. I remember where I was when I bought the comic and it brings back the flood of good memories. What could be more golden than childhood?"



Maybe not living with your parents? You see, Mankuta—leaning hard on 30 years old, the David Lee Roth of comic-artwork collectors—still lives with his mother and father.

This last detail seems like the graceless capper to the life of an über-nerd—granted, a sexually successful über-nerd—but there's a little more to this story than a guy just trying to save rent money to pursue his obsession.

Once upon a time Mankuta lived in New York City's West Village. He moved back home and pays the mortgage because his parents are terribly ill. His father has diabetes so advanced that pieces of his foot have been amputated. His mother has leukemia.

It sounds grim. He says, as if he tells himself this a lot, that at least his parents give him more privacy than his roommates in the Village did. Still, he's been wondering what it would be like to own property. "Something in Los Angeles, maybe," he says. "My aunt and uncle bought something in Florida with a big pool and palm trees in the backyard, and I keep thinking about it."



The keys to this dream are in Mankuta's hands.

The highest prices are paid for "historic" pieces, the birth or death of a character or other milestone events. And while calling the origin of Matter-Eater Lad historic might be demeaning to the Battle of Gettysburg, it does command the cash.

So what then is the ultimate historical artwork? In 1985, DC's 50th anniversary, a 12-issue adventure called *Crisis on Infinite Earths* reduced all the parallel Earths (a staple of science fiction) to but one world, wiping out 50 years of continuity and starting over. This thinned out the herd of multiple Supermen, Batmen, et al., generally combining them rather than resorting to murder. The key moment, however, came when the one and only Supergirl was killed. As in killed and doesn't come back.

The cover of #7, by George Pérez, with Superman crying and holding Supergirl's lifeless body, hits all the notes: It isn't just memorable and historic, it's a striking image reminiscent in its own pop-culture way of Michelangelo's *Pietà*. It's been used on dozens of other covers as homages, rip-offs, parodies. And just about any superhero collector would rank it, for its combination of nostalgia value, significance, emotional impact and aesthetics, as the ultimate prize, the Holy Grail.

Lord knows Jonathan Mankuta wanted it. Amazingly, one of his earliest deals, in 1997, was for all 12 covers of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, including #7. He paid roughly \$6,000—a steal even then.

People in the hobby have an escalating idea of prices: a lowball price, then fair market, then a high auction price, then crazy money or stupid money, something only an idiot would pay. Far off in the clouds, way above that, is life-changing money.

Mankuta tells me, "Right after I got the *Crisis* covers, a guy asked, 'What would it take for you to sell them?' I said \$100,000." But the guy couldn't come up with it. Later another guy said the same thing: "What would it take?" Mankuta told him \$125,000. When this guy was ready to pull the trigger, Mankuta got cold feet. There were certain covers he couldn't imagine living without.

"They're like his lifeblood," says Will Gabri-El, the third person to ask the magic question. And as in all good stories, the third time was the charm. "What would it take?"

"I told him \$150,000," says Mankuta. "That's half a house."

It was also too rich for Will. But he didn't say no, because that's not his way. I have done phone autopsies with Will of deals I screwed up, and he always has instant, quiet, John Madden-perfect color play on what I could have done. To close a deal, Will has patience and persistence and can think three steps ahead, which came in handy with Mankuta.

It took a couple of years. They started e-mailing and phoning each other with trade and cash counterproposals. Will says, "Jon was friendly, but sometimes he'd say stuff like 'I'd rather whore my mom than sell this piece.' And his mom would be right there in the room."

Ultimately Mankuta couldn't stand to give up #7, the death of Supergirl. He pulled it back and kept it and a few others. He threw in some substitutions instead, and in late 2002 they came to an agreement. Will had a year to pay it off.

The final price?

Will is, as usual, circumspect. "It might not be good for the market," he finally says, "to let those numbers out." It was nowhere near the asking price, but it was new territory for Pérez. Still enough to make a down payment on a house? Oh yeah, and then some.

The withholding of #7 caused Will some distress; successfully prying it from Mankuta would have been a terrific difficult-deal story, the kind of thing the rest of us would have shaken our heads at and slapped Will on the back for, telling him that cover was rightfully his. And what would it have been valued at—\$50,000, \$75,000? Hard to say.

Mankuta says something I accept at first: "No amount Will could offer me could get me to part with it. The #7 is more important than money." But as I think about it, the phrase begins to strike me as some kind of open-sesame to understanding why he was really keeping it.



After I read Muensterberger's book on collecting, I had a dark night of the soul, one of those nights that last about three weeks. I went back to my art portfolio with a critical eye. It seemed like a sprinkle of diamonds cast among a ton of cinder blocks. Some pieces pleased me aesthetically—there's something attractive about the joining of words and pictures to form a narrative. But others were clearly inferior—dead space, sloppy inking, placeholders. Here was my 1921 George Herriman *Krazy Kat*, a stellar example of a strip whose artistic lines Picasso and James Joyce admired, but here also was a late *Howard the Duck* wash page by a writer and an artist I didn't like, from a story I'd never read and that I'd bought because, at the moment, I'd needed it. It was as plain as the difference between sipping a 1982 Chateau Mouton Rothschild and drinking it down to the stem of the glass, urgently finishing the bottle.

The final arbiter was my wife, whose Episcopalian good taste my hobby had challenged long enough. She recommended keeping the Edward Gorey, the Lynda Barry and some of the Kirbys but for God's sake to thin out the stuff whose nostalgic value outweighed its artistic merit. My grip slowly relaxed. I sold more than half my collection, and I haven't regretted a single departure. God bless eBay. God bless other people's nostalgia.

I continue collecting but not in the same way. I sell more than I buy. I don't have that fever when I go to a convention. Sometimes when I'm feeling stress, I find myself cruising eBay the way a binge eater pages through the Williams-Sonoma catalog. But I catch myself. Usually. I wrestle with each purchase as if it were the one that could send me off the ledge and back into the pit.

Twelve pieces of artwork hang in my office. Each has a reason for being there. For instance, right over my desk is a Jack Kirby collage in which Mister Fantastic, floating over a weird geometric planet, is saying, "I've done it!! I'm drifting into a world of limitless dimensions!!" Which is exactly how I like to feel when writing. Below it is a Gene Colan splash with Doctor Strange helpless and paralyzed in a maelstrom; the text tells us only that "planet Earth is no more." This is too often how I feel when writing.

Puzzling over the emotional resonance art has, I make a phone call to Mankuta one night. We have an oddly personal conversation; though I've known him for years as a collector, the fact that I'm writing an article has made him eager to expose every detail of his life. His favorite TV show at the moment is *Survivor*, and the idea of that kind of warts-and-all attention is arousing for him. "Ask me anything," he says. "No, really. Really."

It turns out he hasn't used the *Crisis*

money to buy a house, though it seems to be well on its way to spent. He's thinking of selling something else, and this time he's sure he'll use the money to buy property, but he hasn't really nailed down any specifics yet.

After some light chat, with Mankuta doing silly characters—he hopes for a career in voice-over work—I burrow down without much grace and ask, as carefully as I can, "When did you find out your mother had leukemia?"

His voice changes. It becomes less cocky and more strained as he tells me the sad story of where she told him: at the Honda dealership where he worked. She wore sunglasses; he could see her crying; it tore him up. But he can't pinpoint a year. "Nineteen ninety-six? Maybe."

"And when did you start collecting art?"

He can't remember this, though he's told me a few times already: 1996. We talk it through until the chronology is right. She told him, he moved back home, and he almost immediately started collecting artwork. But he really doesn't see a connection.

All he knows is that his mother's leukemia is even worse than the death of his dog. "He was the closest thing I had to a brother. He died in my arms," he says. "He was a Dobie-coonhound mix—looked like Krypto," he adds, referring to Superboy's dog.

"What was his name?"

"Krypto." He pauses here. This is a different Mankuta from the one I've been talking to. He's definitely shaken by this. "You know what's ironic? My dog died in my arms the day after Superman died in the comics. That was so fucked-up. That was literally the worst moment in my life. My best friend."

I can see it clearly—his cradling the poor dog, the raw emotion on his face, the loss, the utter desolation—and I realize I can visualize it very well indeed. Chilled, I ask, "Is it coincidence or something more that you love *Crisis* #7 so much?"

"What do you mean?"

"What's on that cover?"

There is a long pause, a rare thing when talking to Mankuta. "I never even thought about it. Wow, that's amazing." He's talking now as much for himself as for me. "I'm looking at the art right now. Superman is devastated, and his world has crumbled, and that's all I could think of: This dog was such a sweetheart. Why is he suffering? Please, Lord, take him quietly. I was selfish because I wasn't willing to let him go when the doctor said, 'Let me put him to sleep.' I said, 'There's always hope.' And because of that, I caused my best friend to have a painful death in my arms. I would give up everything I own to spare him that pain."

There's a quiet moment here, and it's



awkward for both of us. Then he puts me on the phone with his mother, Berta.

She's sweet and funny and a bit shy. She thinks the world of her son. "He looks like a rock-and-roll guy," she says, "and he dresses flashy, I guess. He goes with a lot of different girls. But he's the sweetest guy inside. I don't think he's interested in settling down with a family the way I hope he would." She pauses. "He can do any voice. And he's not ashamed to do them for anyone." She laughs in a way that announces she's self-aware, that she knows how her son might come off, but she loves him anyway.

Her medication, Gleevic, is working wonders. She's off the interferon, so things are okay. We say good night, and I hurry off the phone.

It's dark in my office. I think a bit about Superman, the last son of the destroyed planet Krypton. An only child, like Mankuta, but he's also an

orphan. And that word, *orphan*, won't go away right now. There's Superman on the cover of *Crisis* #7, cradling in his arms Supergirl—Kara, his only relative—realizing that now he is the sole survivor of his race and completely alone in the universe in a way none of us could understand.

I try to see the art through Mankuta's eyes, and I find not just the past but what might be coming. The cover is a talisman and a life raft. It is literally priceless. It's like a ritual Day of the Dead painting of skeletons by an artist attempting to control death—only in this case with an even tighter fist, because Mankuta actually owns it. The problems Mankuta has already suffered are hard enough, but he is banking against far more intimate losses, and no amount of crazy money can buy that kind of hope.

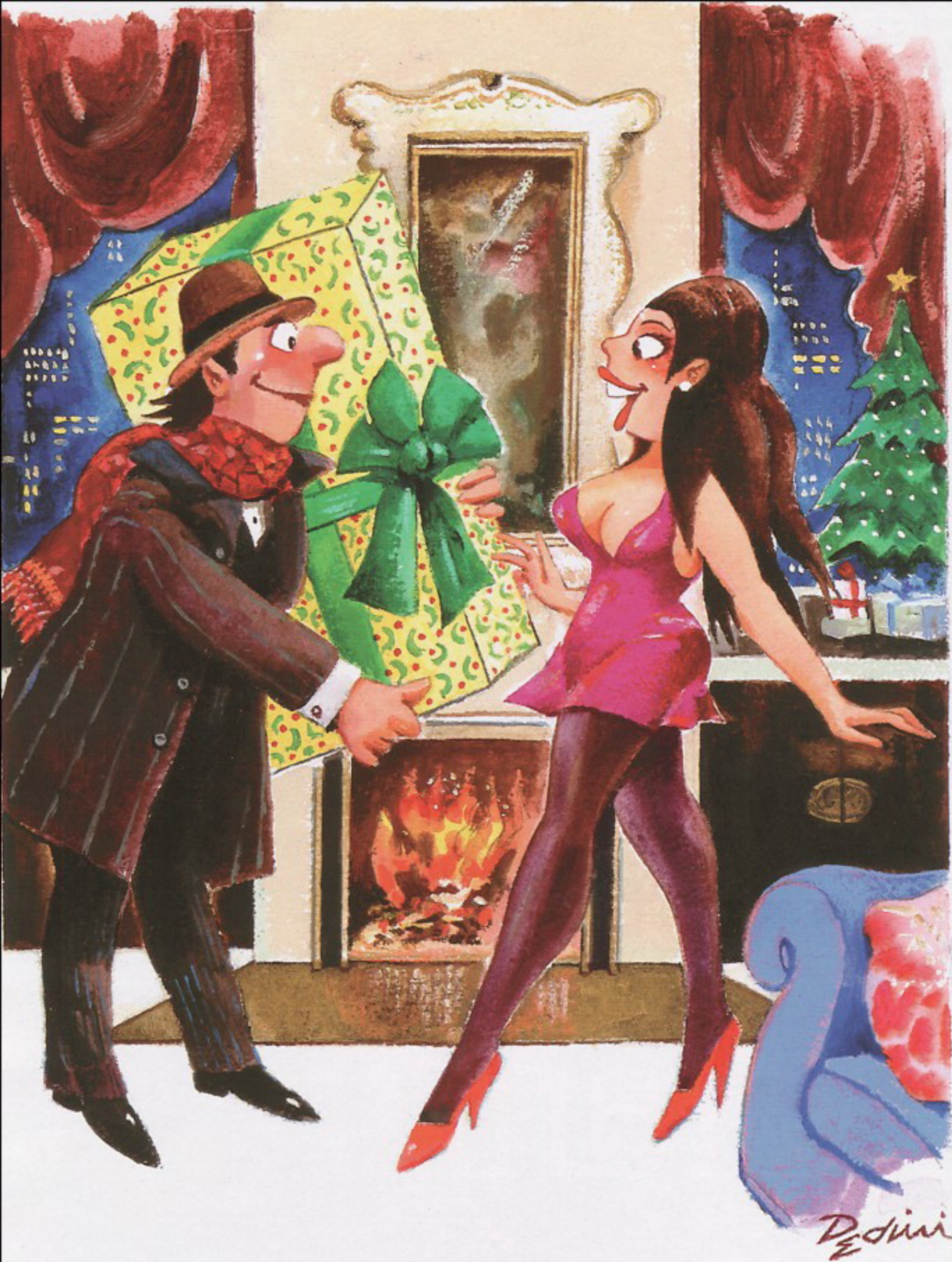







*"Then again, there is also much to be said for the 12 nights of Christmas!"*





*"But, darling, I thought I got everything you had last Christmas!"*





**F**lorida-born Tiffany Fallon has a Dixie flair for putting everyone at ease, which explains how she has sashayed from one career choice to the next. "I dare myself to try things," she says. The 30-year-old earned a college degree in sports management and now gives the inside scoop on college football recruiting as a host at Rivals.com. "I'm a sports fanatic," she says. "In high school I played volleyball and soccer and ran track. After I moved to Atlanta I became a Falcons cheerleader. We went to the

CHRISTMAS  
WITH  
**Tiffany**

Miss December  
arrives unwrapped

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA





Super Bowl in 1999 against the Broncos and lost, but I was happy just to be there. I had never cheered or danced professionally before." Her next adventure involved entering the Miss USA pageant, where, as Miss Georgia USA 2001, she finished as second runner-up. "The idea to do a pageant came after I worked as a flight attendant," she says. "I enjoyed being social with the passengers. I tried to look tailored—to be a throw-back to the good old days. Sometimes I'd get in trouble because my skirt was too short or my hair wasn't right. I'd be like, 'I'm just trying to look fabulous, people!'"

Next, country music star Toby Keith cast Tiffany as the playful vixen in his "Who's Your Daddy?" video. "Now I get recognized anywhere country music is popular," she says. "I have spoofed myself in other videos, playing everything from a farmer's daughter to a tap-dancing envelope. Glamorous, huh? But I like to make people laugh."

Miss December's large extended family has holiday cheer to spare, dressing as pilgrims and Indians on Thanksgiving and as elves for Christmas. "For years I thought everyone did it," she says. "Now I look at pictures and think, Lunatics!"

When asked what she wants from Santa Claus this season, Tiffany responds with a knowing smile. "I'm a low-maintenance person, I swear," she says. "I drive a pickup truck and wear jeans and a T-shirt every day. I've dated poor guys, millionaires and men in between. But there is a side of me that likes being spoiled. I love jewelry and I like tokens of affection, but I would just as well go to a football game and eat a hot dog and nachos. I just happen to love the old-fashioned way of being courted."

"It's definitely advantageous for a woman to have a Southern accent," says Miss December, who was born in Florida and lives in Tennessee. "It just seems like people love to hear you talk. Oftentimes people think you're extremely charming and demure, like a Southern belle."













See more of Miss December at [cyber.playboy.com](http://cyber.playboy.com).











MISS DECEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



*Tiffany Fallon*



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Tiffany Fulton  
 BUST: 34C WAIST: 23" HIPS: 35"  
 HEIGHT: 5'6" WEIGHT: 115

BIRTH DATE: 5-1-74 BIRTHPLACE: St. Lauderdale, Fl.

AMBITIONS: I'd love to continue my career in the sports and entertainment industry.

TURN-ONS: Cowboy boots, good manners, tattoos, sincerity, integrity and diamonds.

TURNOFFS: Tardiness, yelling, lying, man-sandals and piercings.

ADS I'VE APPEARED IN: Ford trucks, Virginia Slims, Longhorn Steakhouse, Turner South, ESPN/Capital One.

MY WHEELS: 2002 Chevy Avalanche

WHY I LOVE TENNESSEE: Country music, cowboys, Uncland great football and Southern Hospitality.

MY FIVE FAVORITE MUSIC ARTISTS: John Mayer, Alicia Keys, Waylon Jennings, AC/DC & Stevie Wonder.



16 years old.



Miss Georgia  
USA 2001.



my head shot.



# PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

**W**hat is the real reason the Ten Commandments have been banned from America's public buildings?

It creates a hostile work environment to post THOU SHALT NOT STEAL, THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY and THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS in a building full of lawyers, judges and politicians.

**B**LONGE JOKE OF THE MONTH: What's the first thing a blonde does in the morning? Goes home.



**O**ne afternoon, two women were sitting on a front porch. The first woman said, "Here comes my husband with a bunch of flowers. That means I'll be on my back with my legs in the air all weekend."

The other woman asked, "Why? Don't you have a vase?"

**A** man walked into church on crutches. He stopped in front of the holy water, splashed some of it on his legs and then tossed aside his crutches. An altar boy witnessed the event and ran to tell the priest what he'd just seen. The priest said, "Son, you've just witnessed a miracle. Tell me, where is this man?"

The altar boy replied, "Lying on the floor next to the holy water."

**T**wo bees met in a field. One said to the other, "How are things going?"

"Terrible," the second bee said. "The weather has been cold and there aren't any flowers, so I can't make honey."

"No problem," the first bee said. "Just fly down five blocks and turn left. Keep going until you see all the cars. There's a bar mitzvah going on, and there are all kinds of fresh flowers and fruit."

"Thanks for the tip," the second bee said.

A few hours later the two bees ran into each other again. The first bee asked, "How'd it go?"

"Great," the second bee said. "It was everything you said it would be. There was plenty of fruit and huge floral arrangements on every table."

"What's that thing on your head?" the first bee asked.

The second bee said, "That's my yarmulke. I didn't want them to think I was a wasp."

**A** teenage girl told her mother, "Mom, I'm pregnant."

"How can that be?" the mother replied. "What did I always teach you about sex?"

The girl replied, "That I should take measures."

The mom said, "Well, you didn't take measures, did you?"

The girl said, "Actually, I did. I went with the biggest."

**A** guy ran into an ex-girlfriend on the street and said, "You know, I was with another woman last night, but I was still thinking of you."

She said, "Why, because you miss me?"

He replied, "No, because it keeps me from coming too fast."

**A** man brought his friend home for something to eat. They walked in and found the man's wife having sex with the mailman on the couch. The man went into the kitchen and started making two sandwiches. His friend followed him in and said, "What about the mailman?"

The man replied, "Screw him. He can make his own sandwich."

**H**ow did the nymphomaniac describe herself in a personal ad?

As a no-holes-barred type of girl.



**A** man visited his elderly father in a nursing home. He noticed that the nurse gave his father hot chocolate and Viagra. The man asked, "Why are you doing that?"

The nurse said, "The hot chocolate will help him sleep."

The man said, "And the Viagra?"

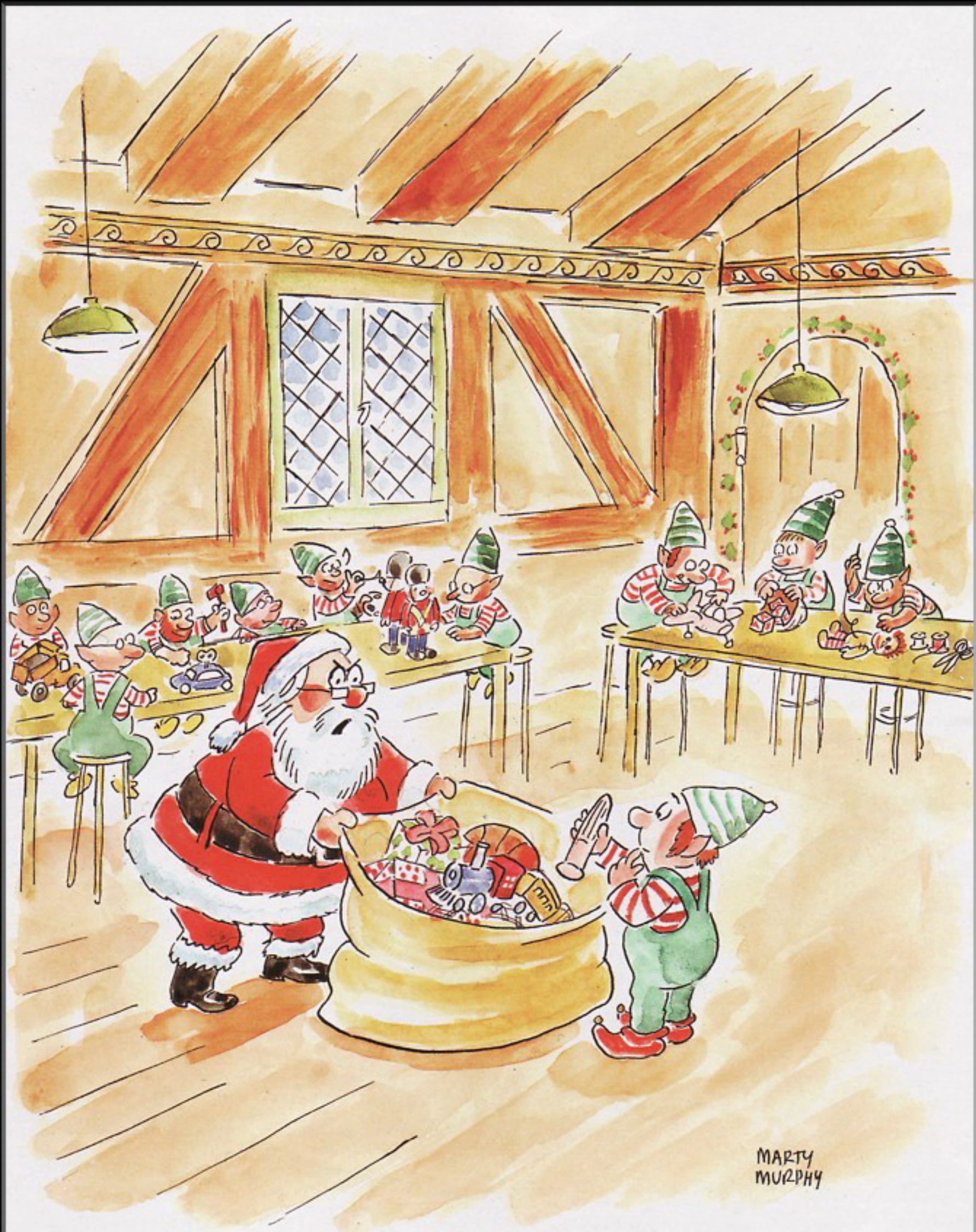
The nurse replied, "That keeps him from falling out of bed."

**W**hat's the downside of wife swapping?

Eventually you get yours back.

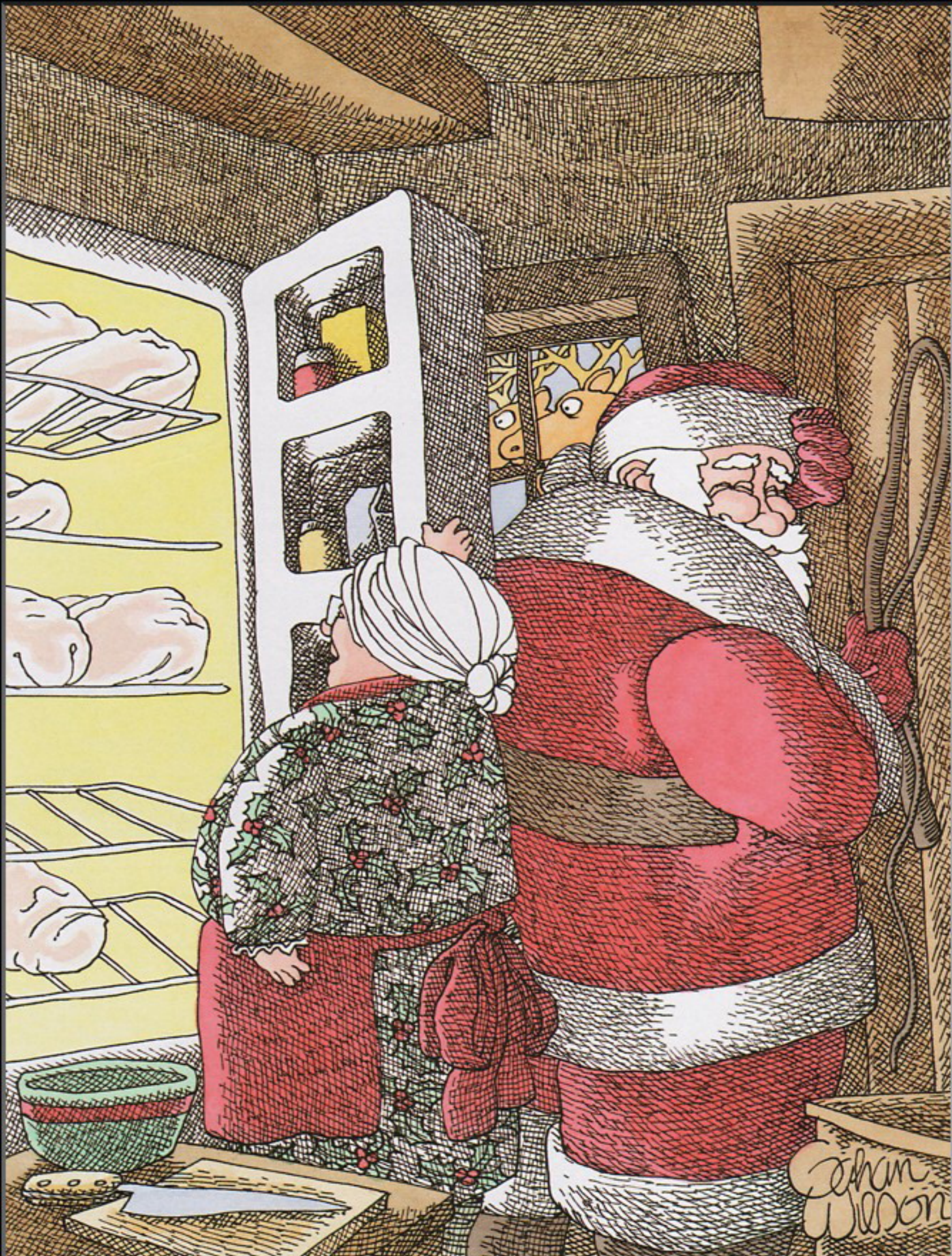
Send your jokes to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or by e-mail to [jokes@playboy.com](mailto:jokes@playboy.com). \$100 will be paid to the contributor whose submission is selected. Sorry, jokes cannot be returned.





*"...Never mind what it's for...it's a stocking stuffer, okay?"*





*"The freezer's almost empty, so be sure to bring back more bad boys and girls than you did last year!"*



# Chat Room







*"Oh, for heaven's sake—he's only an elf!"*



# CENTERFOLDS ★ ON SEX ★

## NICOLE WOOD

### ...AND SHE'LL SHOW YOU HERS

If a man can kiss a woman passionately, she knows they'll have unbelievable sex. So don't just stick your tongue down her throat. Practice on an orange. If a woman lets you perform oral sex on her, it means she's comfortable with you and feels chemistry. Pay attention to her body language. If I'm enjoying myself, I rub up against a guy a lot and touch him. But if I'm not having a good time, I'm kind of stiff, as if to say, "All right, that's enough. Let's watch TV now." You may know what turns a woman on, but don't get into a routine. Change it up. Otherwise it's like eating the same thing for lunch every day.

### SHOW HER SOME SKIN...

I own a day spa. I've discovered that men who get facials have more confidence. Guys who use eye cream find that women will approach them and say, "Wow, you have such beautiful skin." So go to a hip, trendy salon and tell them, "Bring me up-to-date and teach me some new things." And why not go to a place where beautiful women work? Have them pamper you. Look at how much money women spend on skin care. Why shouldn't you do the same? You have skin too. Look in magazines at what men are wearing. You don't have to dress like an 18-year-old, but dressing well will increase your self-esteem.

*Nicole Wood*







*"You looked out and saw that your vehicle was missing.  
Can you describe it?"*





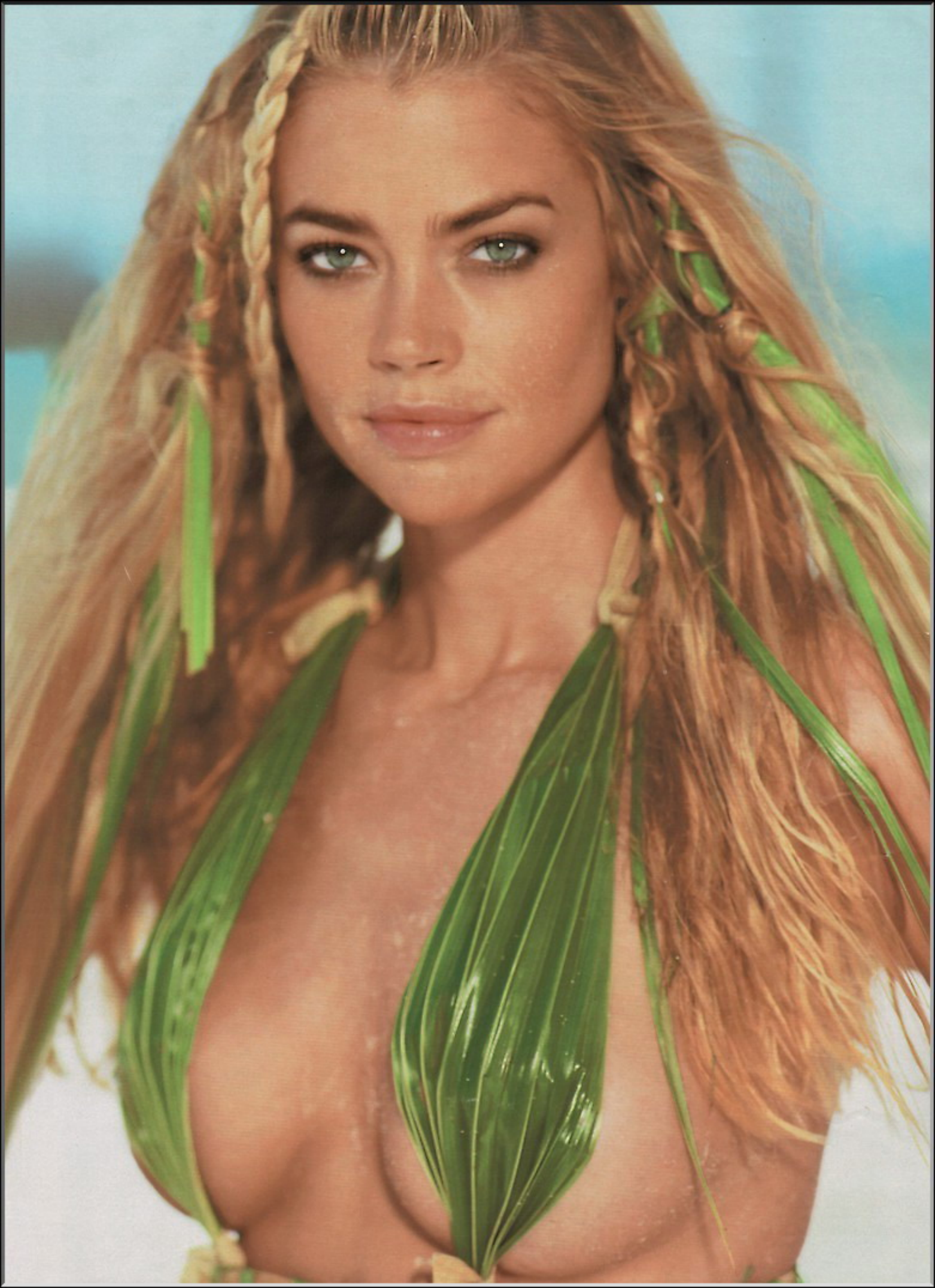
# WILD THING

For Denise Richards,  
there's no time  
like the present

**T**hroughout her career Denise Richards has embraced uninhibited and often outré parts. She battled giant space bugs in her breakout role in 1997's *Starship Troopers*, then went on to play a murderous Lutheran beauty queen in *Drop Dead Gorgeous* and nuclear scientist Christmas Jones (who shows James Bond that Christmas comes more than once a year) in *The World Is Not Enough*. But in her role as a trust fund nympho in *Wild Things*, Denise, along with guidance counselor gone bad Matt Dillon and goth fox Neve Campbell, set the standard for on-screen three-ways. Never in the history of cinema has an actress worn 750 milliliters of champagne so well. When we sat down with this radiant 33-year-old, our first question was, naturally, about her spectacular sapphic liplocks. "Those were the only love scenes I've ever done with a girl," she says. "The director said, 'Please have a drink before you do the pool scene,' so we went into Neve's trailer and made margaritas. We just went for it. We had to." Now that Denise is married to Charlie Sheen, are the sex scenes more awkward? "I had more fun doing one with Neve than I have with a guy," she says. "With a girl you can be comfortable and laugh or say, 'Hey, I don't want this part to show. Can you move your hand?' She's a much better kisser than some of these guys, and her lips are softer. But Charlie and I don't get jealous. I'm sure if I had an explicit love scene coming up

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
STEPHEN WAYDA









we would discuss it at length, but we haven't come to that bridge yet."

Sheen has been so supportive that he encouraged Denise to pose for *PLAYBOY* only a few months after the birth of their daughter, Sam. "He's been a fan of the magazine for years and thought it would be pretty cool to have his wife in it," she says. "I thought it was the perfect time in my life to do this, and it pushed me to get my ass in shape!" Denise and Charlie met on the set of *Good Advice* but didn't get together until she did a guest stint on *Spin City*. "We were smitten with each other when we first met," she says. "There was a huge attraction, but the timing wasn't right." The two had a blast spoofing *Signs* in *Scary Movie 3*, and Denise has appeared on Charlie's latest TV show, *Two and a Half Men*. She's clearly Charlie's angel, but she doesn't take credit for taming the former wild man. "He straightened out before we met and had been sober for three years," she says. "He was definitely in the right place to meet someone and settle down. Our daughter brought out more playful sides in him. For example, Charlie was filming Sam's birth, and I thought he looked sexy in scrubs. I said, 'You've got to take these home with you.' He did, so now we can play doctor. We're best friends and lovers, and I really think we complement each other."

We'll be seeing a lot more of Denise, which—as our island adventure makes abundantly clear—is a good thing. She plays John Corbett's high-maintenance wife in *Elvis Has Left the Building*, a wedding planner in Lifetime's *I Do (But I Don't)*, a salesgirl in *Fat Albert* and a wide-eyed innocent who gets lured into a call girl's world by Daryl Hannah in the provocatively titled Spanish film *Whore (Yo Puta)*. "I got to work with a talented female director and do something different," Denise explains.

"I don't have any regrets about the things I've done in my life," she says. With that attitude, she's perfectly equipped to handle Hollywood or, for that matter, a day at the beach.







"I'm spontaneous," Denise says. "I love  
going from one thing to something else and not  
knowing what I'm going to do next."














A full-page photograph of Denise Richards on a beach. She is nude, with her body covered in sand. She is in a crouching position, looking directly at the camera. Her long, wet hair is draped over her shoulders. The background shows the ocean with gentle waves. The lighting is soft, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

"I found out early I could make more  
money modeling than I could waitressing and scooping  
Häagen-Dazs. But I always wanted to be an actress."

See more of Denise at [cyber.playboy.com](http://cyber.playboy.com).









**QUICK!** HIDE IN THE CLOSET! IT SOUNDS LIKE MY HUSBAND IS HOME!

HI!  
I'M BACK!

GOSH!...ARE YOU **FAT!**

SHHHH!  
WHY ARE YOU HIDING IN HERE?

THAT'S MY DAD OUT THERE! GIVE ME A HUNDRED BUCKS AND MAYBE I'LL KEEP MY MOUTH **SHUT!**

SHHH!!  
A HUNDRED?!  
A HUNDRED?!  
YOU'RE JUST A KID! I'LL GIVE YOU FIFTY!

A HUNDRED OR I SQUEAL RIGHT NOW!

SEVERAL DAYS LATER

TIME TO GO TO THE MALL AND VISIT SANTA.

IF YOU WON'T TELL ME YOUNG MAN, GET UP THERE AND TELL SANTA! HE KNOWS WHO'S NAUGHTY AND NICE!

OH GOOD! I CAN BUY SOME STUFF WITH MY HUNDRED DOLLARS!

HUH?  
WHERE DID YOU GET A HUNDRED DOLLARS?

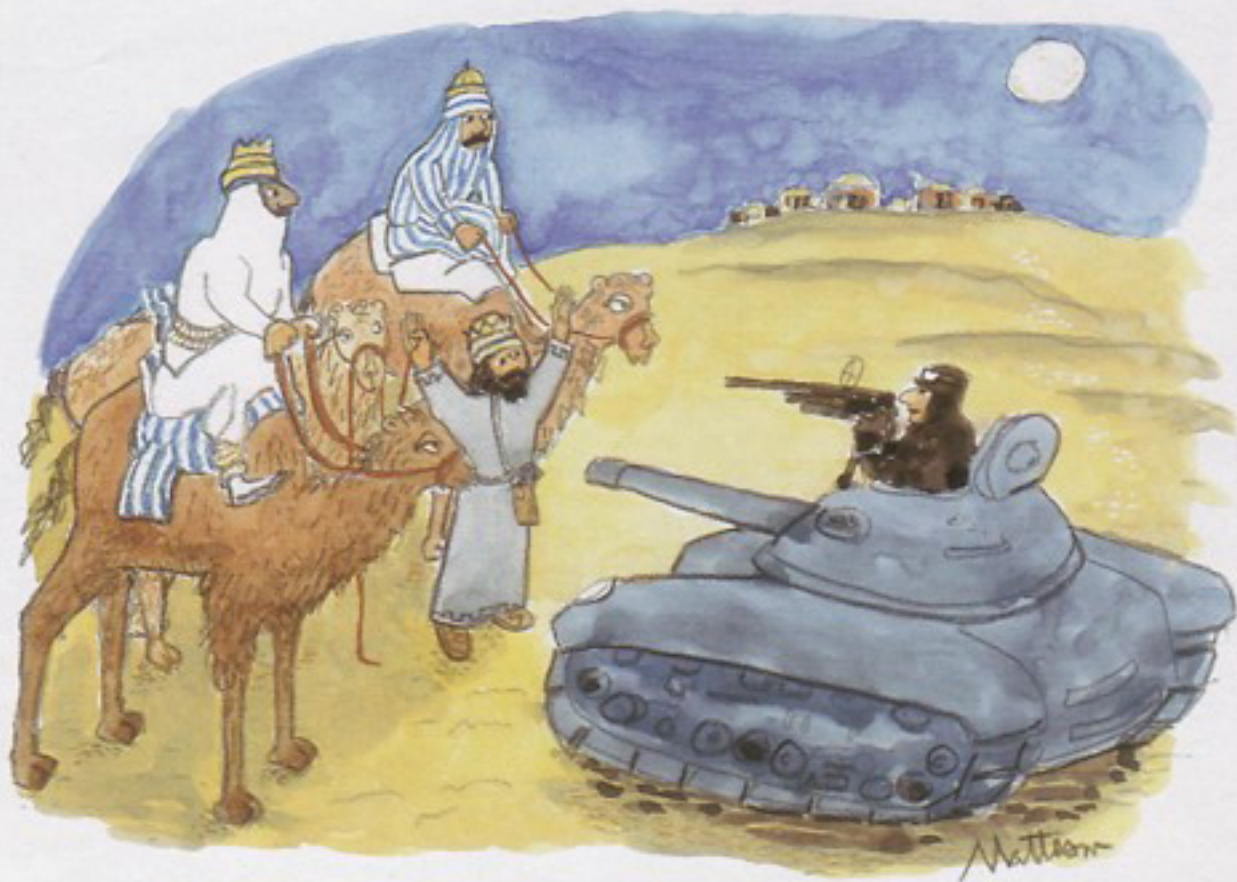
GOSH!...ARE YOU **FAT!**

SHHHH! HEY, C'MON KID! LET'S NOT START THIS **AGAIN!**

SANTA TOWN

Scha





*"You're sure, no firearms, explosives or missiles? Just gold, frankincense and myrrh?!"*





*"First of all, I'd like to thank you both for choosing  
a different sex to marry."*





ON THIS DATE IN 2004 ~ SANTA SIGNS  
AN HISTORIC AGREEMENT TO BEGIN OUTSOURCING  
THOUSANDS OF JOBS TO THE SOUTH POLE.





*"I could be the spirit of Christmas gifts yet to come."*





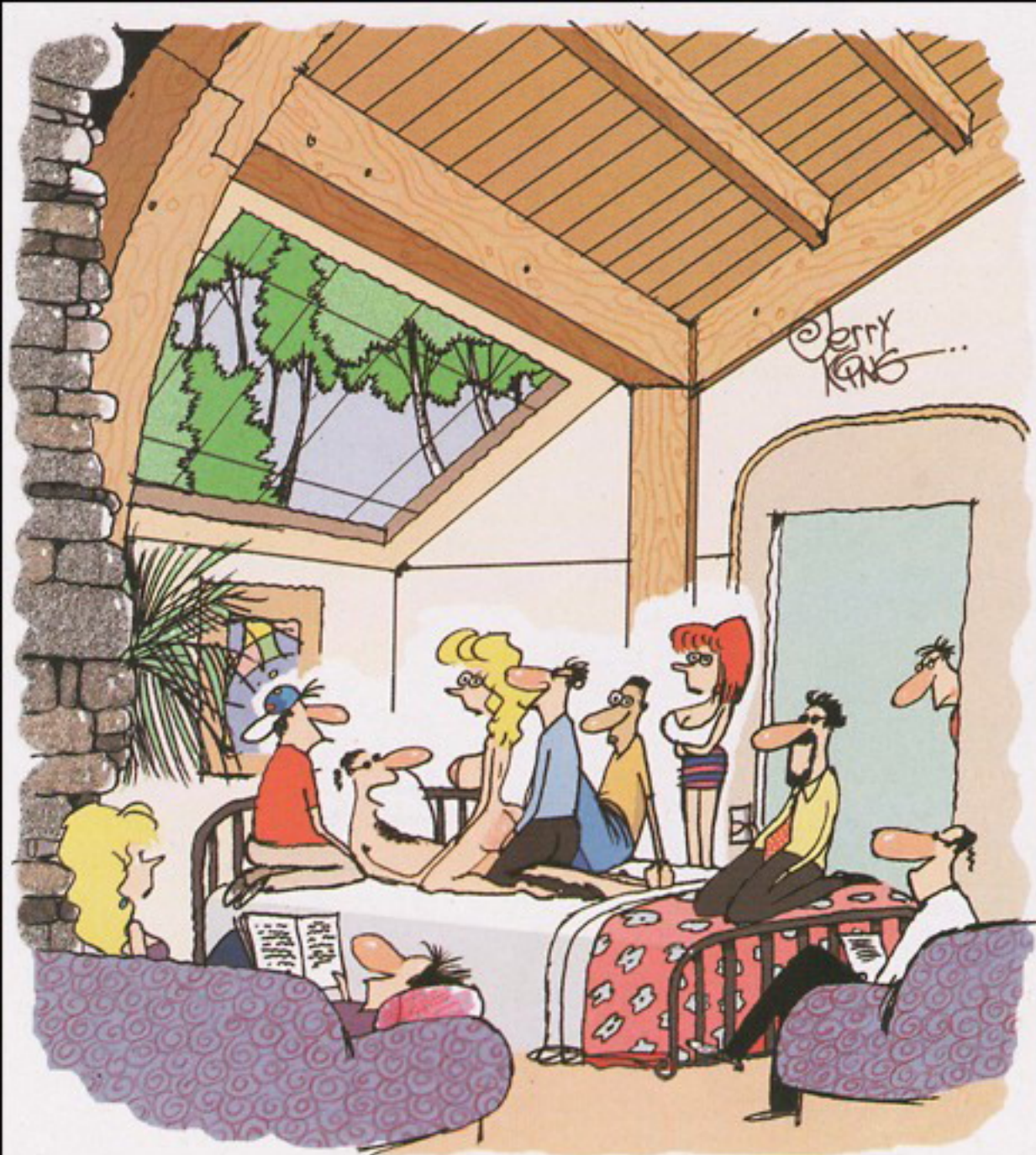
*"That was fast! A split second ago I was in a cave in Afghanistan rubbing a magic lamp."*





SANTA'S LITTLE HELPERS





*"I'm a star, baby. My entourage is part of the package."*

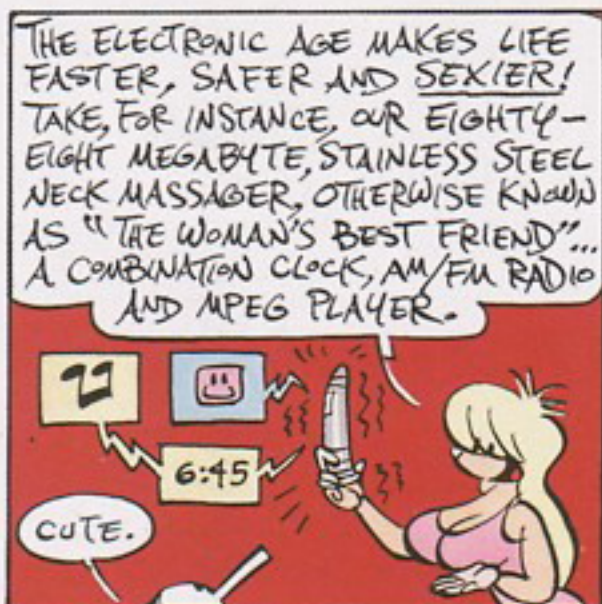
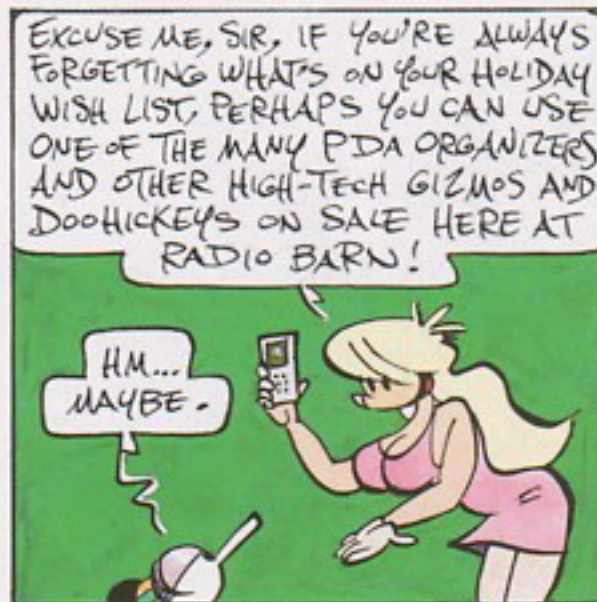




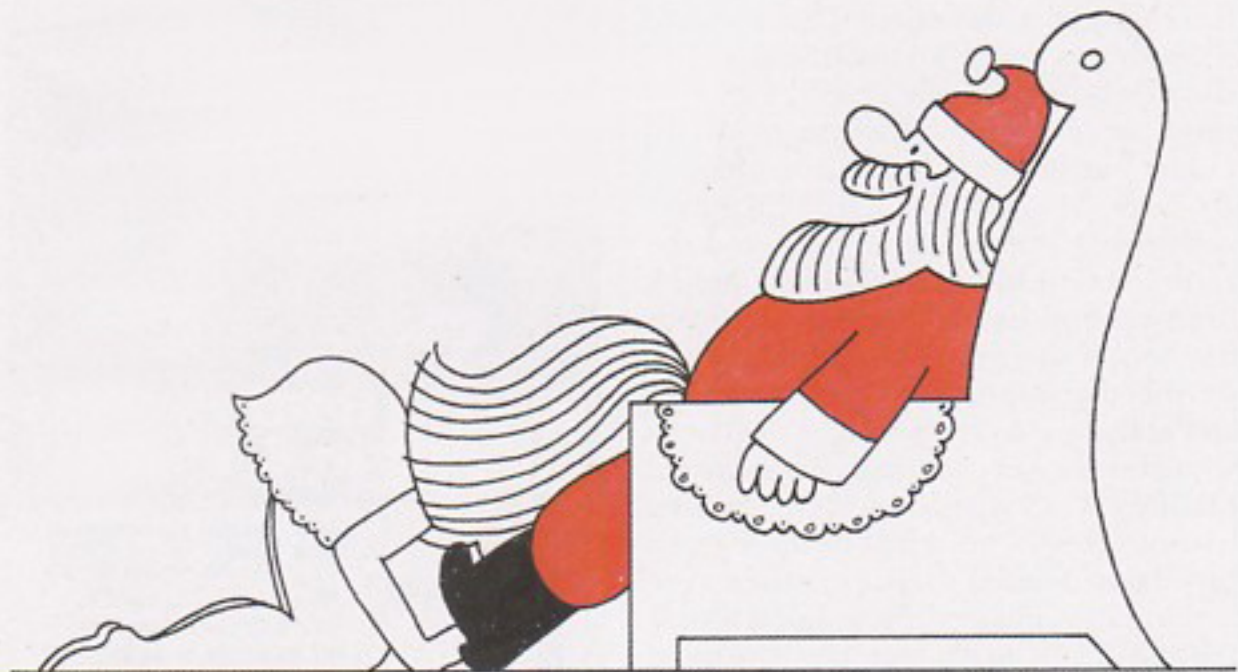
*"Sorry, kid—no Game Boys this year. Santa's saving all his money to buy his little helper here a new set of knockers."*



# Dirty Duck<sup>®</sup> by Bobby London







*C. Barzotti*

*"Don't worry, hon. If your husband still believes in Santa Claus,  
he'll believe anything you tell him."*





*"Try thinking of buying presents as foreplay and you'll enjoy Christmas a lot more."*



# PLAYMATE NEWS



On *The Tonight Show* With Jay Leno, Pam makes her mark as a woman of letters.

## PAM'S NOVEL IDEA

The professors in writing programs tell you to write what you know—and Pam Anderson certainly lets some of herself slip into her debut novel, *Star*. The book follows a small-town girl, Star Wood Leigh, who finds fame when she poses for *Mann* magazine, appears on *Lifeguards, Inc.* and beds a string of bad boys. To promote her book Pam went on *The Tonight Show* and bantered with Howard Stern. *Star* got rave reviews—Anne Rice

called it “an absolute frolic.” Pam, who pens a column for *Jane* magazine, told *People* that the leap to writing a novel was a natural progression. “I’ve kept a journal since I was young,” she said. “I love telling stories.” In the book Pam’s alter ego enjoys a number of steamy sex scenes that may or may not have been inspired by her real-life romps with the likes of Tommy Lee and Kid Rock. (It’s dedicated to “all the men I’ve loved before.”) Even nonliterary Pamela devotees can safely judge this book by its cover—she appears nearly naked on the book jacket. Watch out, F. Scott Fitzgerald: Pam is already working on the sequel.



## 20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Miss December 1984 and PMOY 1985 Karen Velez not only discovered wild parties at the Mansion, she found her future husband there. Karen met Six Million Dollar Man Lee Majors at one of Hef’s movie nights, and the two later got married and had two children. After 11 years the marriage ended, but Karen and Lee remained close. “I love him to death,” she told us.



## LOOSE LIPS



“Marilyn Monroe. I thought she was funny, complicated and obviously very attractive, very beautiful.” —John Kerry, on who he thought was the sexiest Hollywood starlet when he was 20 years old



## RED CARPET DIARIES



Centerfolds and video games go hand in joystick, as our girls proved in Los Angeles at G-Phoria: The Award Show for Gamers. From left: Julie McCullough, Brande Roderick, Pennelope Jimenez and Anna Nicole Smith, with a hot shoulder. Right: Devin DeVasquez at Avalon nightclub in Hollywood for Bench Warner’s Third Annual Summer Party.





## HOT SHOT



CHRISTINA SANTIAGO & LAUREN MICHELLE HILL

## THREE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT PILAR LASTRA

1. She has a role in the forthcoming movie *Malibu Spring Break*.
2. She is in touch with her Latin background. "I love salsa dancing," she says. "There is something about Latin music that takes over your entire body. It just makes you want to move."
3. After reading a book that was written by a friend, *The Complete Asshole's Guide to Handling Chicks*, Pilar was inspired to present a female perspective on dating. She is currently at work writing *The Complete Chick's Guide to Handling Assholes*. "You have to tame the bull before you can ride it," she says.



## POP QUESTIONS: DALENE KURTIS

**Q:** What do you remember most about living at the Mansion?

**A:** I lived there for three months. Everything was great, but what I hold closest to my heart is seeing Hef walking around in his slippers and bathrobe.

**Q:** Are you really dating Nick Carter?

**A:** Gosh, that photo was everywhere! He is a great guy. It was said we were dating, but we just hang out as friends.

**Q:** Are you typically stalked by the paparazzi?

**A:** No, that was my first experience with that. I keep a low profile.



## MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

By Kerri Kasem

My favorite Centerfold is Miss March 2002 Tina Jordan. Tina has been my best friend since she

moved into the apartment next door to mine three years ago. We do everything together. Sometimes I babysit for her daughter. Tina's so genuine and kind, and she always has a smile on her face. She has an incredibly positive attitude toward life.



## RABBIT RADIO

Howard Stern's show is taped down the street from our New York City office, so when the Playmates are in town they usually stop by to hang with the King of All Media. On a recent morning Cara Wakelin promoted Playboy's first-ever swimsuit calendar. (That's her on the cover.) On another day wannabe Playmate Jillian Grace (right) was evaluated by Senior Photo Editor Kevin Kuster. The great news? She may appear as a Playmate in a future issue.



## PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Anna Nicole Smith spent a week in Nebraska City, Nebraska at Camp Kindle, a retreat for kids whose lives have been affected by HIV. In typical Anna fashion, she asked her stylist to redecorate her room with scented candles and some fancy pillows.... PMOY 1999 Heather Kozar (below) is the new Killian's beer poster girl.... Miss March 1987 Marina Baker has been elected as mayor of a small coastal town in the south of England. She has discussed her lifelong political awareness and her Playmate experiences on BBC radio....



Have a pint for Heather.

PMOYs Julie Cialini and Stacy Sanches flanked Palms Hotel & Casino owner George Maloof (below) at a Playboy Home Entertainment VIP party in Vegas.... Jenny McCarthy signed a multipicture deal with Beverly Hills Film Studios. The first project is *Dirty Love*, which is directed by her husband, John Asher.... Jodi Ann Paterson appears in commercials for Taco Bell and Bacardi.... During the



Viva las Playboy!

American Meat Institute's annual Hot Dog Lunch on Capitol Hill, animal rights activists Kari Kennell and Lauren Anderson donned lettuce bikinis on behalf of PETA. Not surprisingly, even the carnivores were captivated.

cyberclub

See your favorite Playmate's pictorial in the Cyber Club at [cyber.playboy.com](http://cyber.playboy.com).



# Grapevine

## Meet the Simpsons

No wonder censors wanted to nip Janet Jackson's exhibitionism—wardrobe malfunctions are catching. Here JESSICA SIMPSON sings her chest out at an L.A.-area concert. You have to love how she hits those high notes.

GALAXY STARRMAN.COM



CHUCK K. SUTHER

## Fanning the Flame

Mark our words: PENNY FLAME is going to blow up. Thanks to an Audrey Hepburn look and a smoking role in the hotbody.com film *Undress for Success*, her image has burned its way onto our retinas.

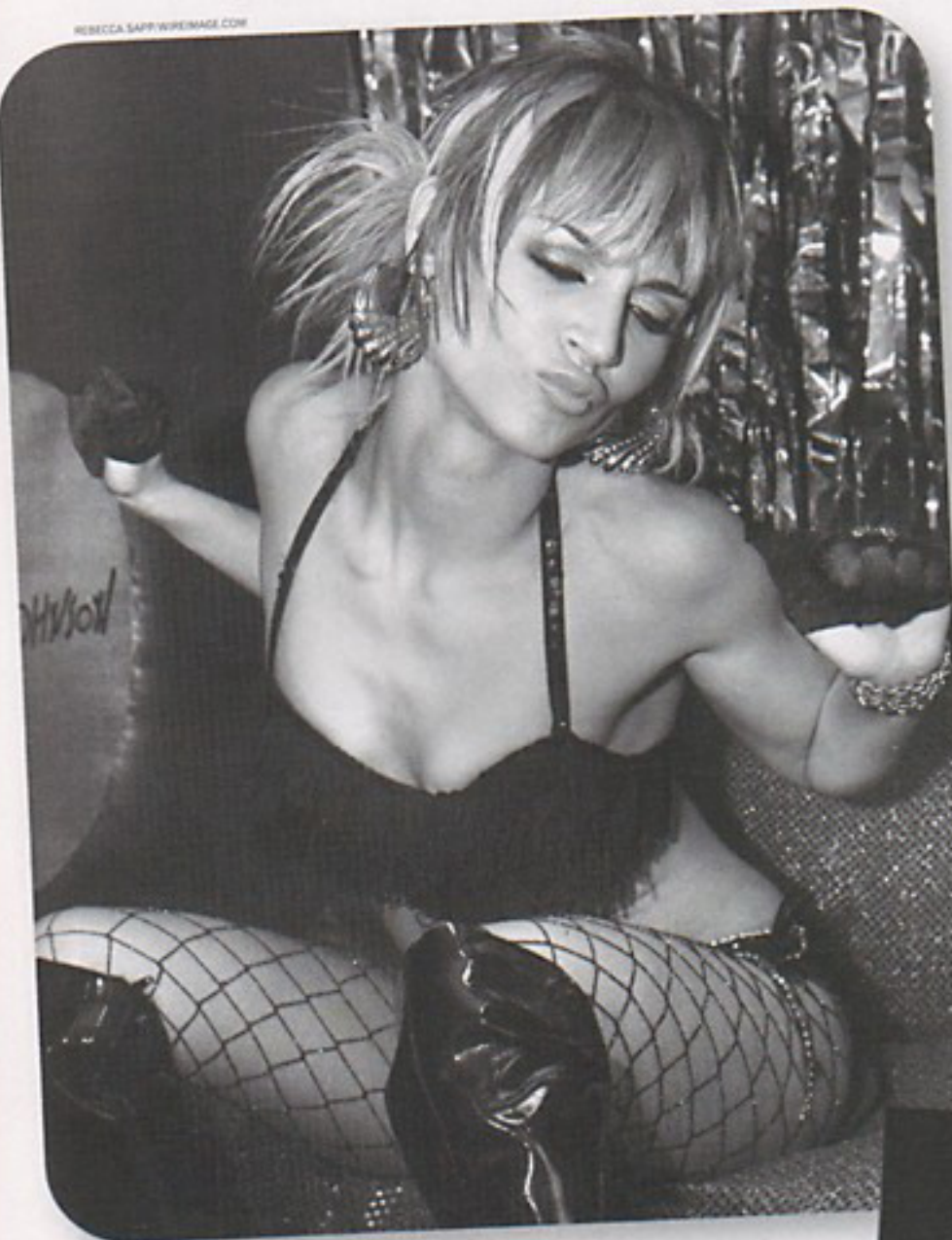
LAWRENCE LUCIFER FILM BASIC.COM

## Incubust

Adhering to the model-rock star dating mandate, CAROLYN MURPHY, the face of Estée Lauder, has been linked to Incubus lead singer Brandon Boyd. At the CFDA Fashion Awards, she put the rack into rock and roll.







## Cat on a Hot TV Show

When she's not playing Emily, the sexy assistant on *Entourage*, SAMAIRE ARMSTRONG knocks faux-leather boots with L.A.'s Pussycat Dolls. In one episode, her boss asks, "Do you think my assistant is hot?" The unanimous answer: "Meow."

## Give Peas a Chance

When the Black Eyed Peas perform, we can't see past the newest member, singer FERGIE. At a T-Mobile Sidekick II launch party, she shook up the Peas' hit "Where Is the Love?" Right here, Fergie.



CHRIS WATKINS/WIREIMAGE.COM

## Royal Flesh

In the gritty film *Havoc*, Princess Diaries star ANNE HATHAWAY ditches her aristocratic ways. But in this shot her royal charms are still on display.



RENA DURHAM/OLIVIA PRESS



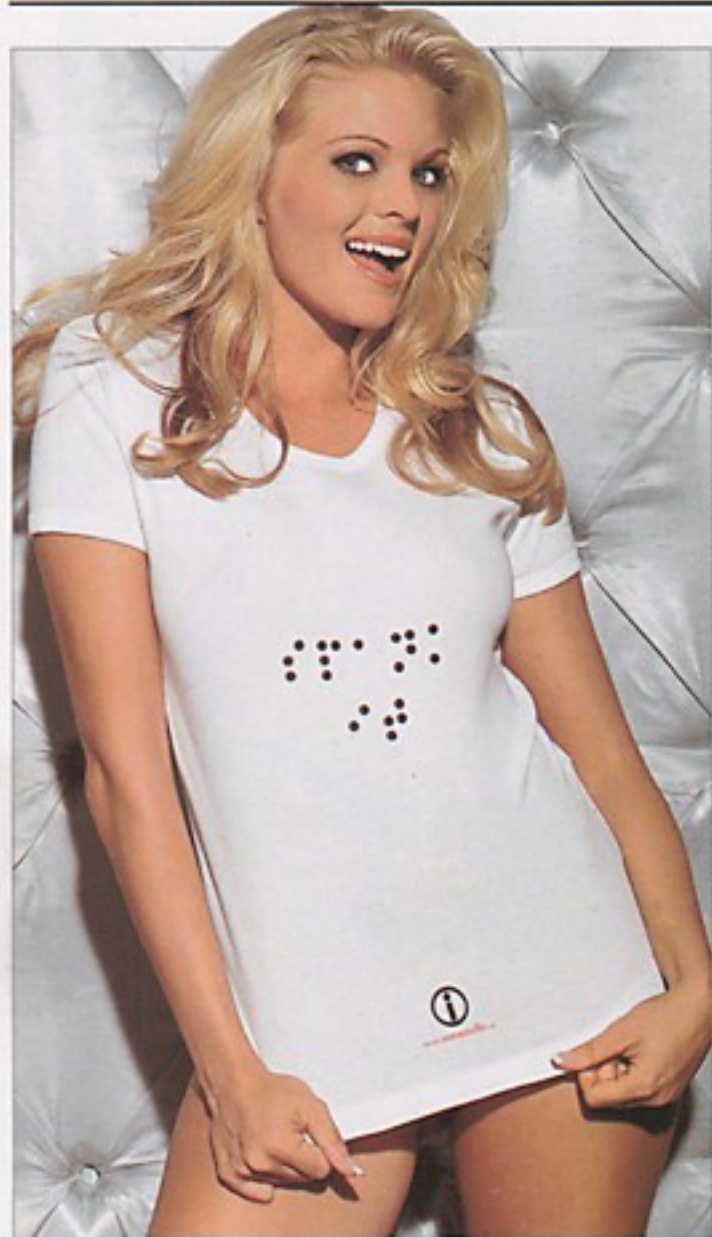
## Lucky Sevigny

Or should we say lucky Vincent Gallo? If you've seen the provocative movie *Brown Bunny*, you know exactly what we're talking about. At the Viva Glam Casino to benefit DIFFA in NYC, *Bunny* star CHLOË SEVIGNY pleases the paparazzi.

JAMES DEVANEY/WIREIMAGE.COM



# Potpourri

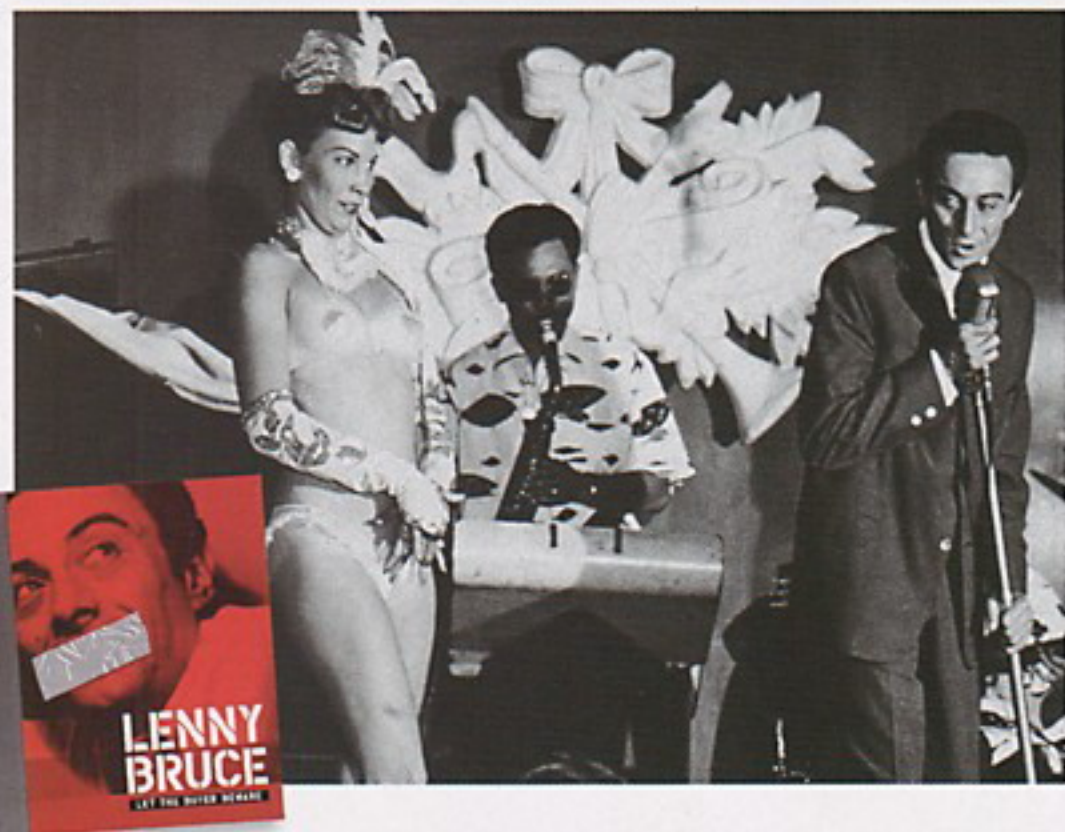


## NOT SEEING IS BELIEVING

Reading braille is tough if you've never had lessons. But if you slide one of these tight T-shirts over your favorite pair of breasts and dance your fingers all over them, you'll get the message right away. Braille T-shirts (\$30, [notvanilla.us](http://notvanilla.us)) come with your choice of phrases—"Harder faster deeper," "I need a licking," "Cheap and easy" and "Spank it"—written across the chest in high-density rubberized ink. (An English translation is printed inside the hem of the shirt for those who need it.) The cotton tees come in two colors: "pure black" and "dirty white."

## WHIRLED PIECE

When the i-Top Pro (\$15, [itoys.ca](http://itoys.ca)) first landed in our offices, we almost tossed it. Now it's our default conflict-resolution tool. Key to the top's appeal: It can display words and numbers as it spins, thanks to eight red LEDs that "write" on the air. The top is programmed with five different spinning-oriented games and remembers high scores. If you can beat 763 revolutions, we'll see you in the national championships.



## THE ORIGINAL KING OF COMEDY

Since the world no longer has Lenny Bruce to kick around, we'll have to settle for *Let the Buyer Beware* (\$70, [shoutfactory.com](http://shoutfactory.com)), a comprehensive new collection with six discs full of classic stand-up, interviews, rarities and historic moments such as an onstage bust and a 1959 conversation between Lenny and Hef. Lovingly packaged in an oversize hardcover book, this is a bona fide Bruce-ophile's dream. And don't worry about leaving it on your coffee table—if anyone balks at titles such as "How to Relax Your Colored Friends at Parties" or "Sign a Release? I Didn't Do My Fag at the Ballgame Bit Yet!," you can remind them what Lenny taught us: "The truth can never be offensive."

## SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

There's a knock on the door. You open it, and—merry Christmas!—your mailman hands you a box full of premium aged steaks. What gift tops that? The Chef Special Palm Pak (\$340, [thepalm.com](http://thepalm.com)) from the esteemed Palm Restaurant franchise features four New York strips, four porterhouses and four filet mignons, packed in a cooler with dry ice. We sampled these babies, and they're better than what you get in most steak joints.





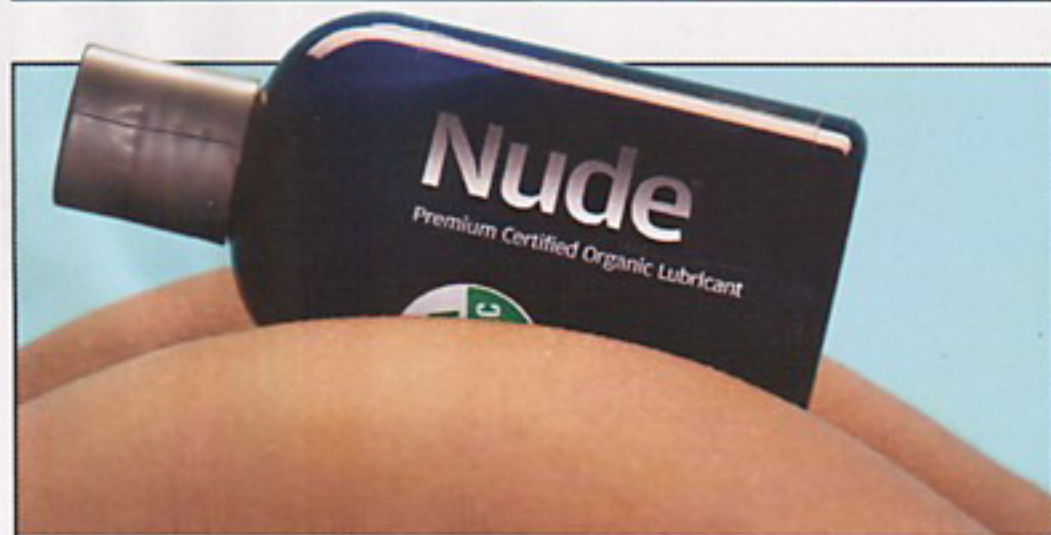


#### FAR-OUT SOUND

Despite tons of in-car receivers, stand-alone options for satellite radio have remained scant. Now XM and Audiophase have cooked up the Skybox (\$200, [bestbuy.com](http://bestbuy.com)), a bug-eyed boom box that has not only a satellite receiver but also an AM-FM terrestrial radio tuner and a CD player that can handle both standard CDs and MP3 discs. It's a mobile sonic smorgasbord.

#### SECRET RITUAL

Prohibition was an amazingly innovative time for drinkers, distillers and barmen, with all of them trying to outwit the law. Mixologists, for example, couldn't leave their barware lying around, so it went incognito. You can celebrate that era today with these secret shakers: a 14-inch lighthouse (\$195) and a ship's light that comes in red or green—port and starboard beacons—for the left- or right-handed bartender (\$130). Both are made of nickel-plated brass; available at [martiniware.com](http://martiniware.com).

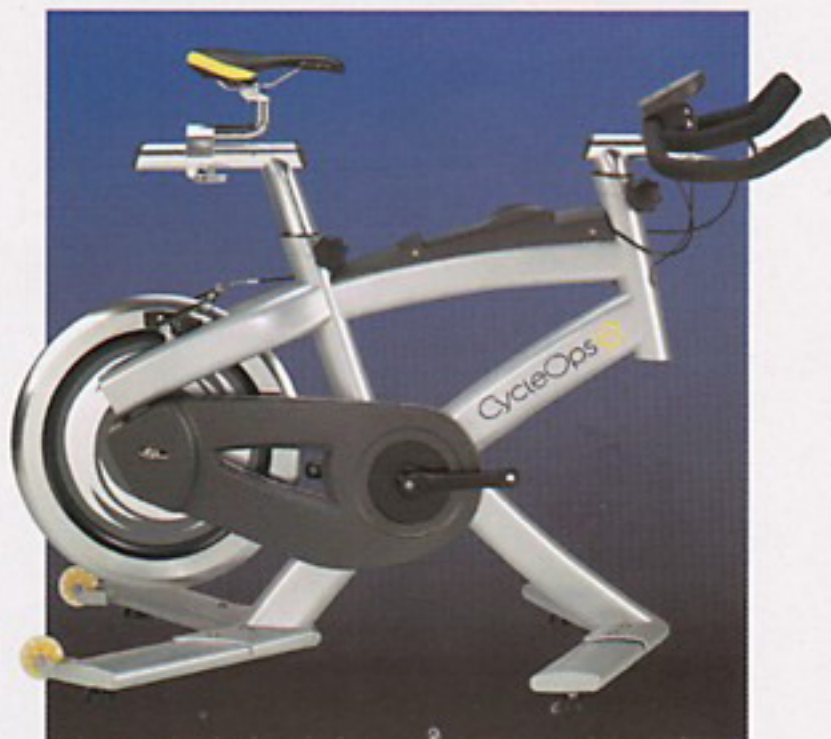


#### HEALTHY SNACK

Nude, from Applied Organics (\$20, [organiclubricant.com](http://organiclubricant.com)), is the world's first USDA-certified organic lube. Think of it as a sex grease that doubles as a nourishing moisturizer for those hard-to-reach places. "It's odorless and slick as hell, and it lasts all night, so you don't have to keep reapplying," says our road tester. "Thumbs-up."

#### POWER TRIP

The steel-framed CycleOps Pro 300PT exercise bike (\$1,700) can measure speed and heart rate and download the data to your computer. But what really makes it different is the PowerTap mechanism, which measures in watts the energy you produce so you can quantify your workouts. Lance Armstrong can pump out 460 watts an hour, enough to power almost eight 60-watt bulbs. Go ahead, Mr. Edison, try to match that!



#### THE LENS CAP

Few casual photographers keep a tripod in their jacket pocket, yet almost all consumer cameras feature that funny screw-in mount on the bottom. To let you finally take advantage of this sorely underused socket, Japanese gizmo importer Semsons & Co. offers the Bottle Cap Tripod (\$15, [semsons.com](http://semsons.com)), which screws onto the top of any standard plastic beverage bottle. Now you can put together a quick camera stand anywhere there's a vending machine.





# Next Month



JENNY IS BACK.



DIGGING UP PRIVATE RYAN: CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY FICTION.



CRITICAL CAR: WHAT TO DRIVE RIGHT NOW.



2004 PLAYMATES: A LOOK BACK (AND FRONT).

**BLOOD, SWEAT AND WAGES**—THE BORDER FACTORIES CALLED MAQUILADORAS MAY BE HARMFUL TO BOTH HUMANS AND NATURE—THINK BLACK COUGH, PROSTITUTION AND PITIFUL WAGES. WHEN OUR REPORTER CONDUCTS A PERSONAL INVESTIGATION, IT PROVES MORE DIFFICULT THAN HE EXPECTED. BY **WILLIAM T. VOLLMANN**

**JENNY MCCARTHY**—AFTER BEING CROWNED PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR 1994, THE FLY MC WAS EVERYWHERE, FROM MTV'S *SINGLED OUT* TO THE COVER OF *TV GUIDE*. NOW JENNY HAS SIGNED A MULTIPICTURE DEAL WITH BEVERLY HILLS FILM STUDIOS. TO CELEBRATE, THE BEAUTIFUL GOOFBALL GRANTS US ONE WISH: A BRAND-NEW PICTORIAL.

**TOBY KEITH**—AT SIX-FOOT-FOUR AND 240 POUNDS, AND WITH MORE THAN 20 MILLION ALBUMS SOLD, KEITH IS COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIGGEST BADASS. THE RIGHT-WING HERO TALKS ABOUT CAUSING CONTROVERSY ON TV, HIS MUSICAL IDOLS, HIS BEEF WITH THE DIXIE CHICKS AND HIS FAVORITE SUBJECT: POLITICS. A SHOCK'N Y'ALL *PLAYBOY* INTERVIEW BY **STEVE POND**

**THREESOMES**—A RIVETING ACCOUNT OF ONE WOMAN'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH A WELL-KNOWN TV PERSONALITY. THAT'S ALL WE CAN SAY. BY **ANONYMOUS**

**JAMES CAAN**—THE STAR OF TV'S *LAS VEGAS* HAS SURVIVED FAME, DRUGS, RUMORS OF MAFIA TIES, FAILED MARRIAGES AND DUBIOUS MOVIE CHOICES. NOW CAAN TALKS TOUGH IN A FEARLESS *20 QUESTIONS*. BY **STEPHEN REBELLO**

**HOWARD HUGHES**—IN TRUTH, HE WAS A BAD BUSINESSMAN AND ALMOST TOTALLY LACKING IN PERSONAL CHARM, COMPASSION, DECENCY AND MAGNETISM. SO HOW DID HUGHES BECOME THE MOST FAMOUS BILLIONAIRE IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND A CULTURAL ICON? **NEAL GABLER** HAS SOME ANSWERS.

**THE YEAR IN SEX**—JANET JACKSON'S SUPER BOWL WARDROBE MALFUNCTION! BRITNEY'S TWO WEDDINGS! PARIS HILTON'S SEX TAPE! AND THAT'S JUST PAGE ONE. IT WAS A RAUCOUS YEAR IN SEX, AND WE RELIVE THE MOST PHOTO-WORTHY MOMENTS.

**PLUS:** GREAT FICTION BY **NEIL LABUTE** AND **CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY**, CARS OF THE YEAR, NEW CHAMPAGNE COCKTAILS, DAPPER TUXEDOS, HOW TO MAKE EXCELLENT JAPANESE FOOD, HAMILTON VERSUS JEFFERSON BY **GORE VIDAL**, A MEMORABLE PLAYMATE REVIEW, BABE OF THE MONTH **CHANEL RYAN** AND OUR FIRST PLAYMATE OF 2005, MISS JANUARY, **DESTINY DAVIS**.